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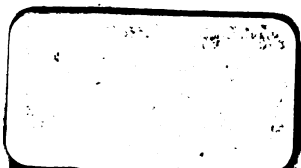
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A CARGO  
OF  
CHRISTMAS RHYME



600082780V







FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.

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# FLOTSAM AND JETSAM:

*A Cargo of Christmas Rhyme.*

*P. B.*

BY

HOOKANIT BEE, ESQUIRE.



LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1853.

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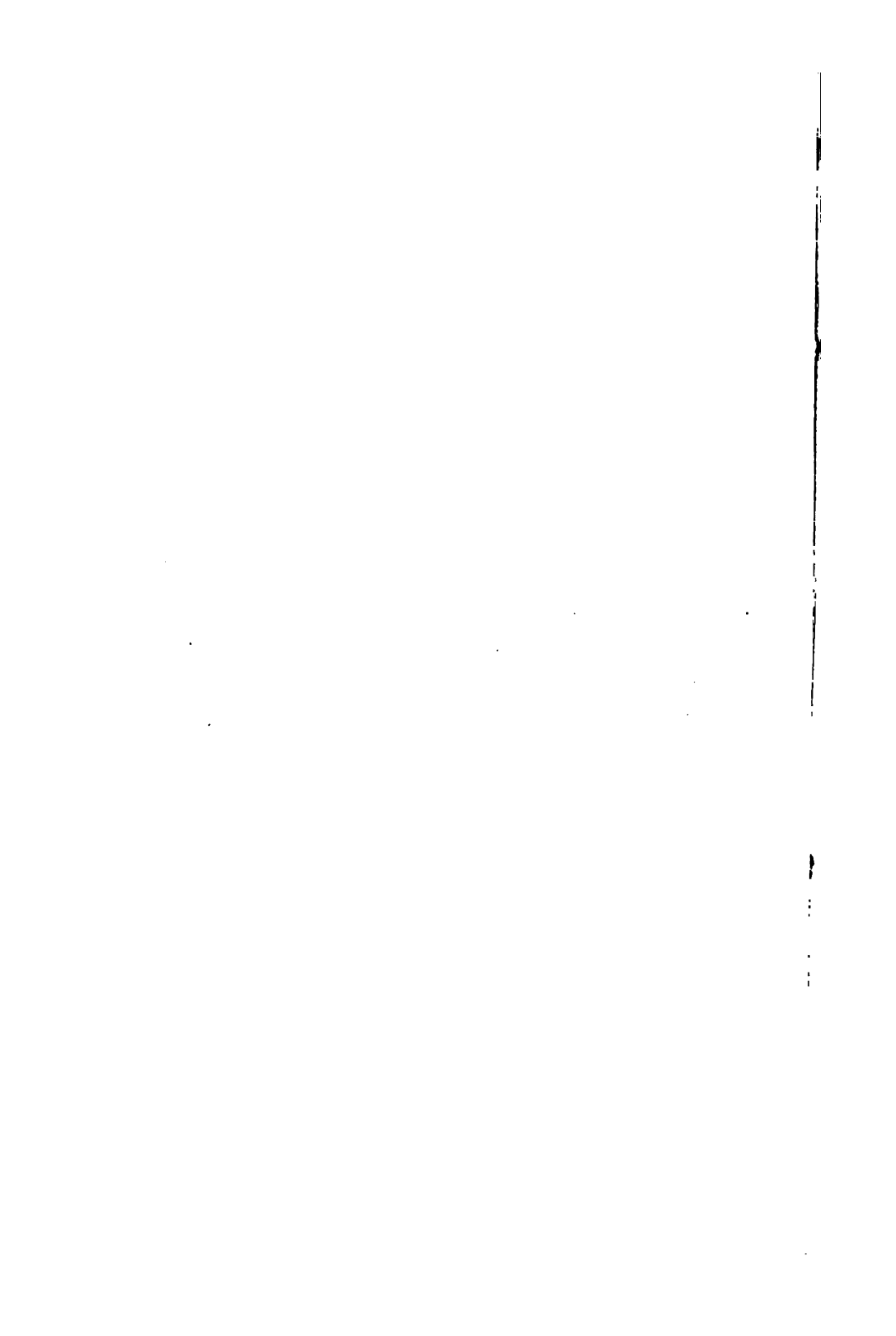
TO  
THE HONOURABLE  
HENRY J. COKE.

MY DEAR COKE,

I inscribe this, my maiden Volume, to you, as a friend and brother Author. Not that I for a moment aspire to the literary distinction which I have strong hopes will, at no distant period, be your own ; but that to place upon my title-page the name of one with whom I hold so many opinions, both literary and social, in common, is a sincere gratification to your friend

H. B.

*November, 1853.*



## P R E F A C E.

The contents of the present Volume are not such as to require an elaborate preface. To the Author, rhyme has always been the most complete and agreeable of mental relaxations ; indeed most of the following pieces were penned when both mind and body had already undergone a full day's work. Whether he has succeeded in extending its efficacy, in similar cases, from production to perusal, is quite another affair. To such a test, however, he now submits his book, with anything but overweening confidence in the result.

It was his original intention to have prefixed an introductory note to the leading

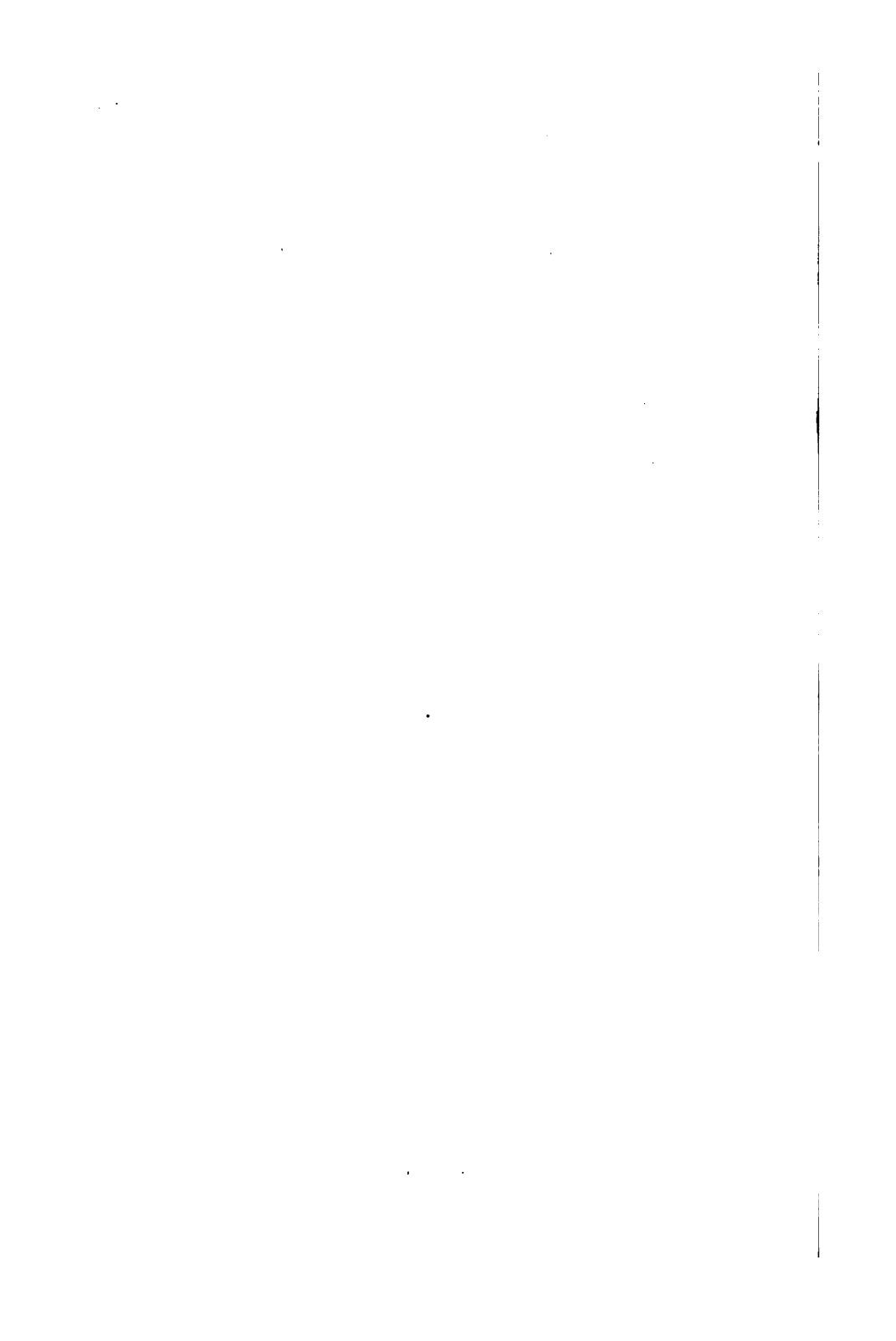
poem. Upon consideration, however, it seemed scarcely worth while to make any fuss about so slight a story ; the machinery and allusions of which must be familiar to every reader.

Most of the remaining pieces have been already published in various magazines. To the proprietors of the latter, the Author is much indebted for the courtesy with which they have permitted him to reprint his contributions in their present form. Where this has been done, the name and number of the periodical in which the article in question originally appeared will be found appended.

For the benefit of the fairer portion of his audience, as well as of those gentlemen who may have forgotten their Blackstone, the Author takes this opportunity of observing that there is nothing essentially cabalistic in the ' Flotsam and Jetsam ' of his title-page.

These outlandish and uncouth dissyllables are, in point of fact, but part and parcel of the barbarous language of the law. They

are applied, respectively, to those ownerless and abandoned articles of merchandise which are occasionally found floating upon the surface, or fished up from the bottom, of the sea. Thus interpreted, they seem appropriate enough to such a cargo as the Author now sends adrift, without mark or name, upon the wide waters of literature.



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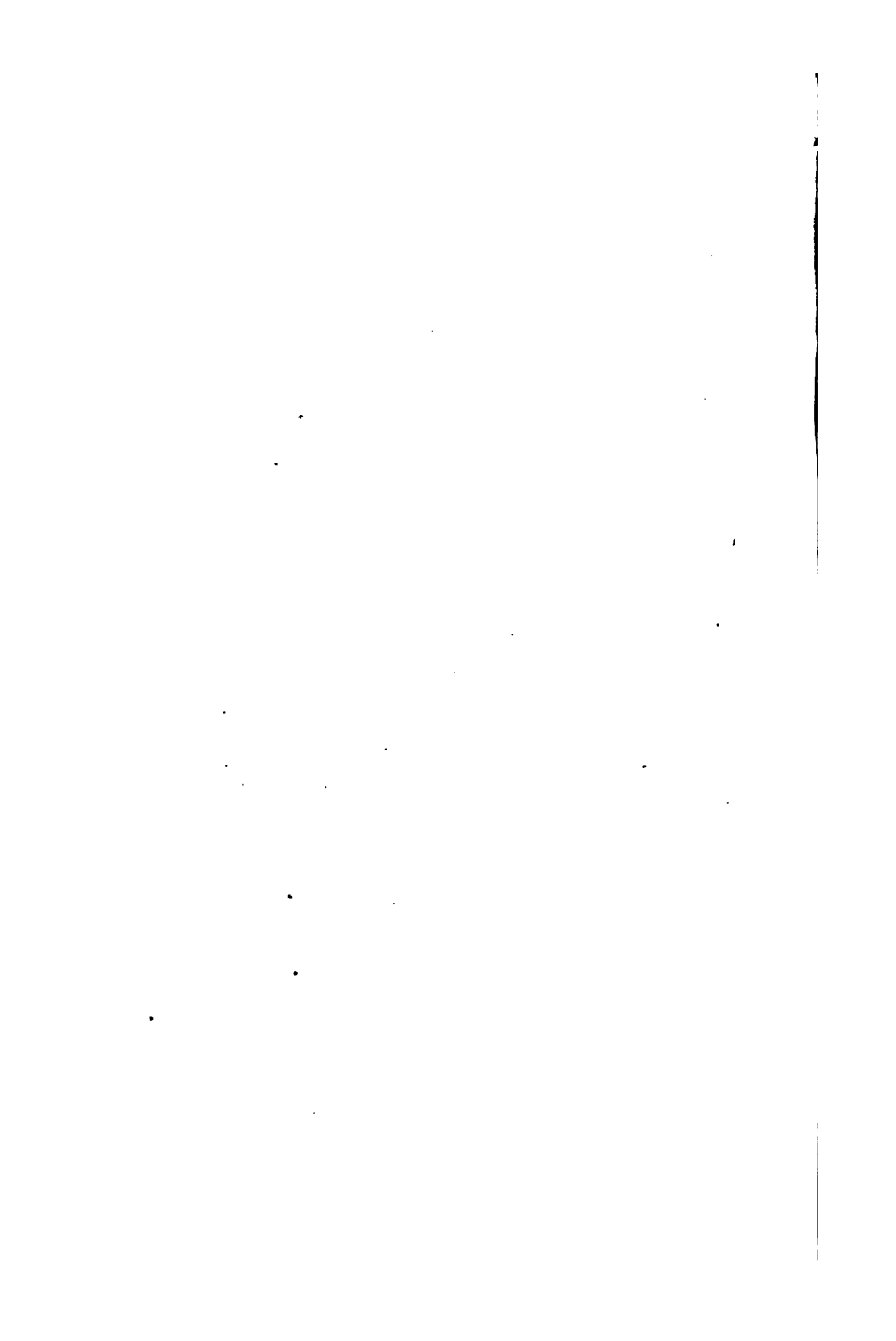
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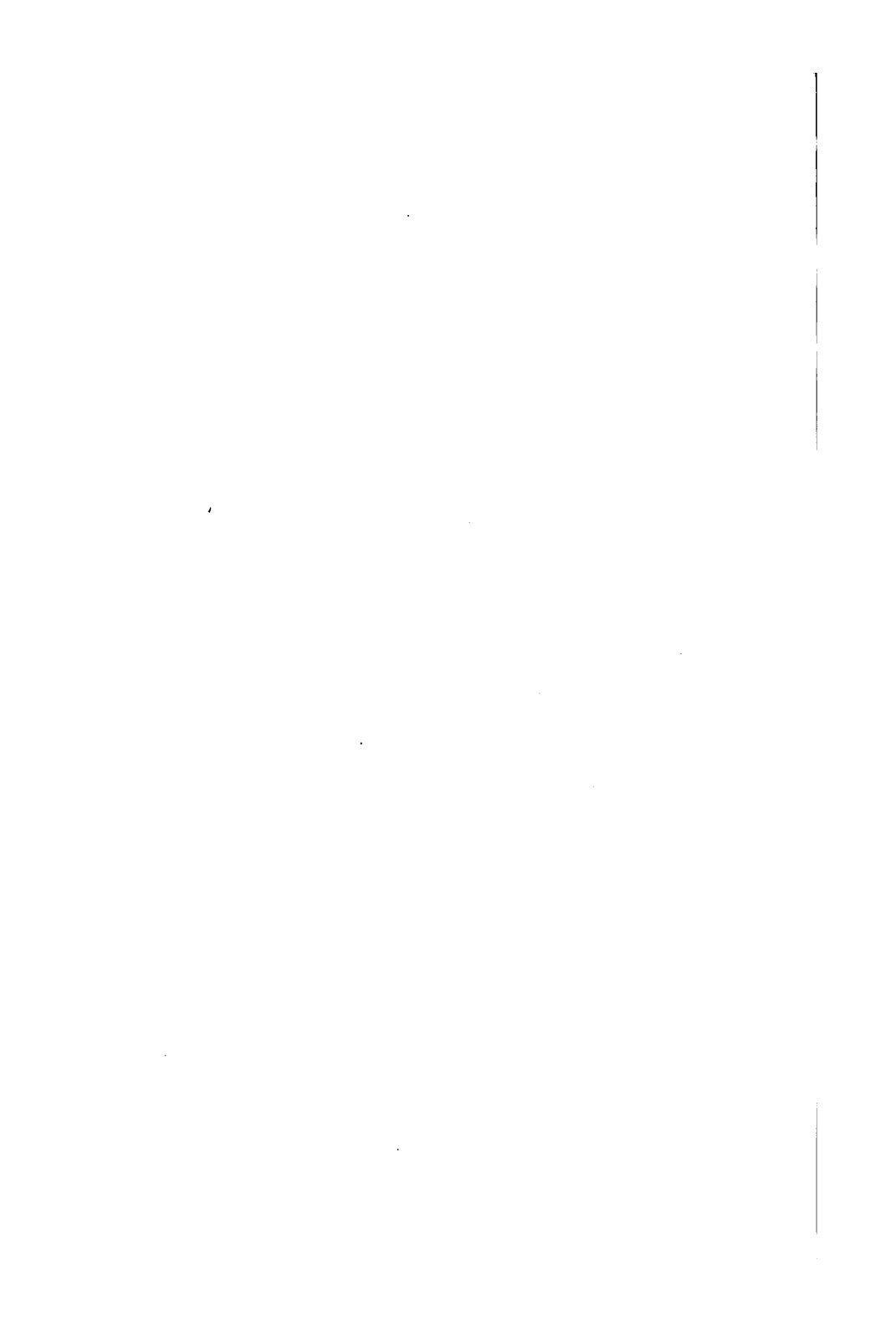
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PART I.

ORIANDE.



# O R I A N D E.

## CANTO I.

No sound of Earth to break the charm  
That reigns within the Fairy dell;  
The rounded moon shines clear and calm,  
The glassy river owns the spell:  
Unrippingly it wanders on,  
Through scathed ravines of limestone gray,  
Where never yet the sunlight shone,  
Nor ever blew the gales of day;  
Where sullen trees for ever drink  
The darksome water winding by,  
And rugged crags o'erhang the brink,  
Like fossil, old-world Tantali:  
They seem to watch the water-weeds  
That sway so idly to and fro;  
Perhaps they count the bubble-beads,  
And wonder why they sail so slow;  
Perhaps they're striving to outstare  
Their rough old faces, glassed below;  
Perhaps they're very happy there,  
Perhaps they're not—but who's to know?

Ah me ! while yet a child at school,  
 I knew each reach and bend and pool  
 Of that old stream; we called it then  
 'The River of the Haunted Glen.'  
 For many a magic tale was told  
 Of those deep waters, clear and cold;—  
 Men said, the boldest swimmer, there,  
     Went writhing helpless down to death;  
 They told us that the very air  
     Held something strange to mortal breath;  
 They said the owls that built aloof  
     In those dark trees, knew more than we;  
 They said their nests were schoolboy-proof—  
     We felt that this could scarcely be.  
 Amid black roots and rocks below,  
     They said swam wise and wary fish,  
 That never rose to mortal throw,  
     Nor stretched their length on mortal dish.  
 Bluff Isaac Walton once, they said,  
     Went empty home with surly strides,  
 And brake his rod and beat his head,  
 And cursed, all down the river-bed,  
     The flicker of their steel-bright sides.

But stranger things than these they told,  
     Those quaint old prosy swains;  
 They said, that pulseless current rolled  
     Through the deep Earth's cold veins,  
 Long mining miles, with wind and turn,  
 From its far-flooded fountain-urn;  
 Beneath strange vaults, for ever bright  
 With that great river's ghastly light,

Roofed in with rarer jewel-drops  
 Than you could see in London shops :  
 And one long labyrinth, broad and high,  
 Unmeasured yet by mortal eye,  
 They swore ran seaward, far away—  
 They knew it well, themselves, for they  
 Had heard, resounding in those caves,  
 The tumbling of the Baltic waves ;  
 They said that when the clock struck ten,  
 Sea-fairies filled the Haunted Glen.

Long years had passed since that young time,  
 And I had roved in many a clime ;  
 Through distant lands, o'er foreign seas,  
 With course as wayward as the breeze.  
 Much had I learnt, and much forgot,  
 Ere once again I trod the spot  
 Which, even in the sternest heart,  
 Will find and probe some tender part,  
 And thrust upon the coarsest brain  
 A pleasure deeply seamed with pain.  
 For, O, how few can calmly stand  
 Where, launched on life, they left the land,  
 And think, amid that schoolboy scene,  
 What once they were—and might have been !

Unchanged I found the Fairy glen—  
     The stones, and owls, and trees, the same—  
 Ah ! blithe young comrades grown to men—  
     How dear to me was every name,  
 Carved rudely out, with painful skill,  
 On those grim willows, drinking still !

I sat me down to muse, and feel  
 How sweeping and how stern the change ;  
 To catch old memories by the heel,  
 And tell spent years in backward range ;  
 To dream of those, the loved of yore,  
 Now scattered all the wide world o'er :  
 Some herded in the slavish ring  
 That fawn and whine round Gold, the King,  
 Some battling on in mart and camp,  
 Some wrinkling by the midnight lamp,  
 Some buoyed on Fortune's prosperous flow,  
 Some grounded on the shoals of woe ;  
 And one, our darling and our best—  
 O, who would break his early rest !  
 Unharmed, unwearied in the strife,  
 How brief, how bright, *his* glimpse of life !

One dropping sand-grain, so they say,  
 Will all in shining splinters lay  
 Boulogna's crystal bell ;  
 E'en so, sometimes, a wild bird's call,  
 A step, a sound, a leaflet's fall,  
 Will startle those who dwell  
 In the calm halls of memory—  
 The palace of a reverie—  
 And shatter all its fretwork fair,  
 Like frail Alnaschar's basket-ware.  
 So started I, as up the glen,  
 So seldom touched by feet of men,  
 A hoary stranger came ;  
 With slow staff-measured steps he strode,  
 A mighty beard of silver snowed  
 O'er half his ancient frame ;

His haggard eyes, in darkness bound,  
Were sternly fixed upon the ground,  
Nor once confronted mine :  
He might have passed, in days of yore,  
For sightless palmer from the shore  
Of holy Palestine.  
Alas ! but little reck we now  
Of sandal, scrip, and far-cut bough,  
When pilgrims of this tearful vale  
Insure their lives, and start by rail.

I say not that no secret fear,  
As that strange blind old man drew near,  
My better manhood shook.  
Some spirit of the lonely glen,  
Or stern Enchanter—in whose den  
Caged virgins weep, and harmless men,  
Lured from the pipe and crook—  
He seemed, and all my fond old nurse  
On windy nights would oft rehearse,  
Of people that grew worse and worse,  
And never said a bible-verse,  
And died in hideous pain ;  
Yet in their graves would not lie flat,  
But started at the sexton's pat,  
Exclaiming, "What the devil's that?"  
Rose freshly in my brain.  
How, marked for endless penance-doom,  
Instead of resting in the tomb,  
They nightly stalked through wind and  
gloom,  
And frost and showering snow ;  
"Till, down the roaring chimney-shaft,



In rage and spite they shrieked and laughed,  
 Detecting, with infernal craft,  
 The bad boy couched below !

Her aim was good, her means were ill,  
 She quacked us with a dangerous pill,  
 For, to this very day,  
 Pale 'Bogey' sniggling round the door—  
 Or 'Raw-head's' visage, cracked and sore—  
 I know quite well would make me roar  
 In the most rueful way :  
 And thus, as towards my lonely seat  
 The figure came with noiseless feet,  
 My heart as hard as Hamlet's beat,  
 'Till, desperately brave at last,  
 I gave "good morrow" as it passed.

Slowly, sadly, paused the blind,  
 And made me answer, calm and kind ;  
 He was not used to speak, he said :—  
 He thought that all mankind were dead,  
 He seldom met them in his walk,  
 Or if he did, they wouldn't talk,  
 But scampered home, as if they feared  
 The very waving of his beard !

" Good gracious, sir, you can't mean that !"  
 Cried I ; " we're all alive and kicking !  
 You shouldn't walk so like a cat,  
 Your steps down this lone pathway picking.  
 It frightens people, don't you see ;  
 I'll take my oath it startled me ;—

And, as you say, that beard's enough  
 To scare a man of sterner stuff.  
 I know I'm rude—and yet, since here  
 We meet alone, no mortal near—  
 What means this hermit-solitude?  
 Comes it of evil or of good?  
 What from the common world doth bar  
     you?—  
 If bar it doth—in short, who are you?"

    With calm, commanding sign,  
     These random words of mine  
 The old man checked, and sat him down,  
 Where the sunburnt moss grew thick and  
     brown

    On the trunk of a fallen oak.  
 "If thou wouldst learn," he sternly said,  
 "Why this rough dale I blindly tread,  
     And bear the bitterest yoke  
 That ever crushed with slavish load  
 A wretch upon life's thorny road,  
 Hopeless alike of help or grace,  
 Bear with me for a little space.

"I am not of this present age—  
     Three hundred years have dreamed away  
 Since upon life's ungrateful stage  
     I fretted *my* short hour away;  
 I have no share in earth or sky—  
     That is over—past and done.  
 Listen, and I'll tell thee why  
     I stand again below the sun.

I bore—but O, how long ago!—  
     The blazon of a knightly shield;  
 Knew how to give and take a blow,  
     And fought in many a famous field.  
 Right well could I recall the tale  
 Of days when I wore shirt of mail;  
 Of grand old battles, where the slain  
 Lay thick as daisies on the plain;  
 Of tilts where neither champion cried  
 ‘Enough,’ till in the lists he died!  
 But let it pass, for never more  
 Shall youth’s hot blood these limbs restore,  
 And ne’er again where vanguards meet  
 Shall dash my old bay charger’s feet.  
 Yet still, sometimes, in waking dreams,  
 Through flying smoke the armour gleams,  
 Resounds again the anvil-clash  
     Of blades upon the targe,  
 The driven lances crack and flash  
     Along the line of charge;  
 And whistling high across the sky the iron hail-  
     storm comes,  
 Drowned in the crash of trumpets and the clat-  
     tering of the drums!

“I loved of course, for who did not,  
 To whom God gave the blissful lot  
     To live in times like those?  
 The sweet young Lady Violet—  
 Her image haunts my darkness yet—  
     Threw my first tourney-rose;

A locket of her sunbright hair  
 Lay warm upon my breast;  
 Her tiny glove 'twas mine to wear  
 Amid my horse-tail crest.  
 Her father was an English earl,  
 But a dull bigot and a churl;  
 He loved me not and, worst of all,  
 He warned me from his castle hall;  
 Nay, more, he bade, in heathen spite,  
 His chaplains curse me day and night!  
 Little I recked of curses then,  
 But curse they did, those bat-faced men!  
 At last, when failed their drawling ban,  
 He tried a much more likely plan,  
 And bribed a blackguard musketeer  
 To shoot me from behind a hedge—  
 Would I had caught the rascal near,  
 He should have felt a broadsword's  
 edge!—  
 'A pound to hit him in the head,  
 And two pound ten to shoot him dead!'

Such were the standing orders—yet  
 I courted Lady Violet.

"One night—one happy night in June—  
 I met her at the garden-gate,  
 And, by the friendly lantern-moon,  
 I deeply swore that never Fate  
 Should tempt me from one dear design,  
 Or thwart me till I called her mine!  
 The south wind through the garden sprang,

And shook the blooming chesnut-cones,  
 But mournfully methought it sang,  
 As if it had ridden where church-bells clang,  
 And caught their funeral tones.  
 Like whispers of that secret ear,  
 Whose night-voice is so clear and low :  
 O, pray for those that helpless hear  
 The footfall of a coming woe !

“ Away, away, I rode full spur !—  
 I always rode madly when thinking of her—  
 The parting sign was fondly flung,  
 As down the slopes bay Norman sprung ;  
 At hoof-stroke, snort, and fiery bound,  
 The living echoes danced around,  
 As gleamed on yonder mountain gray  
 The first grave smile of rising day.

“ Sudden and loud my courser neighed,  
 His eager ears are backward laid,  
 His raven mane is backwards thrown,  
 For the echoes that follow are not of his own !  
     And, fleet as the light,  
     On a steed milk-white,  
 A fairy form shot by ;  
     She gave me no heed,  
     But patted her steed,  
 And rode as the bird would fly.

“ Oh, bled my horse’s flanks I ween,  
 As I dashed him after her over the green !

For her face—oh, Heaven!—her face was one  
To see and to die!—for like it was none;  
O, I would have given my hopes of grace  
For another look at that sweet young face!  
Poor bay Norman suffered for her—  
Madly I smote him with fist and with spur—  
His breath with fluttering sobs he drew,  
But his heart was good and his mettle was true,  
And when he was failing I lifted him through,  
For I knew we were close to the edge of the glen,  
And, ride as she might, I must ride with her then!

“Paused her fiery palfrey white,  
Upon the crest of yonder height,  
As, drenched with sweat and splashed with blood,  
Beside her my brave charger stood,  
With stiff-stretched neck and trembling limb,  
Staring blindly over the brim.

“Unheeding of my horse’s tread,  
She sat nor turned her queenly head,  
But gazed with longing wistful eyes  
Full on the purpling eastern skies.  
The fingers of one slender hand  
Played on her sparkling bridle-band,  
The other smoothed her golden hair,  
Blown rudely by the morning air.  
O, tell me not of right or wrong,  
For hearts are weak and passion strong,  
And, in a moment, lapse and fall  
May wreck the firmest heart of all!

The sudden pulse that shook my frame—  
 It was not blood, but blasting flame!—  
 The thrill that shot from spur to glove—  
 O, it was madness more than love!  
 Aye, spurn me—mock me if thou wilt—  
 I know my folly, feel my guilt;  
 But calm yon aspen's trembling branch,  
 Cry, halt! where leaps the avalanche,  
 And then, and not till then, reclaim  
 The love-struck wretch with Reason's name!  
 She looked, she need have done no more—  
 She smiled—she spoke—and all was o'er.

“ ‘ Who is the warrior locked in steel  
     That rides by the light of the moon?  
     What would he with me,  
     The Queen of the Sea?  
 Let him but name the boon.  
 For yonder, down in the lamp-lit glen,  
 Are gathered together my fairy-men;  
 I'm riding to find for them something to do:  
 Warrior, say, shall they work for you?’

“ I looked, and lo! far down the glen  
 Swarmed the delicate fairy-men,  
 Coming and going with lamps and bells,  
 To the musical chime of the trumpeter-shells.  
 Some were linked in a twinkling ring,  
 And danced whenever they found a spring;  
 Some sat high on the lonely rocks,  
 Twisting water-weed into their locks;

Some were at play in the moon-lit stream ;  
 Some were plaiting her silver beam ;  
 Some were making the wild-cat growl,  
 Or picking up pebbles to fling at an owl ;  
 Others were playing at 'Who'll catch me ?'  
 Or cutting their names on the rind of a tree.

“ ‘ Now, by Saint George ! ’ I wildly cried,  
 ‘ To live in thy smiles and to ride by thy side  
 For one short hour were joy divine—  
 What would it be could I call thee mine ?

Ah ! Queen of the Sea,  
 Cannot it be ?

Don't say no, for it's little to me  
 What those nice nimble sprites can do :  
 I can't think of them for looking at you.’

“ ‘ And, warrior, wouldst thou dare with me  
 To pass down under the vaulted sea ?  
 And wouldst thou thus for aye resign  
 The light of the sun that never may shine  
 On eyes that ever have seen the things  
 That girdle the shrine of the salt sea springs ?  
 If not, beware of oaths misplaced,  
 And,—don't be taking me round the waist !

“ ‘ But, if thy heart be bold and true,  
 And thou wouldst pass with me,  
 The charm is mine to carry thee through  
 The barriers of the sea.



“ ‘ The coy and bashful maids of earth  
 Hang backward every one,  
 And hold the love of slender worth  
 That's lightly lost and won.

“ ‘ No sickly shame is known with us,  
 No flattering falsehood ours,  
 Whose hearts are free, as leaps the sea  
 Around our crystal towers.

“ ‘ Come down then, warrior, boldly down,  
 And rule with me in my deep-sea town!  
 Long have I sought me a gentleman bold  
 To share my throne below;  
 For the hands of our mermen are sticky and cold,  
 And their manners dreadfully low.  
 They *will* carry fish in their pockets, and chew  
 Sea-weed of a morning; and, oh! it's too true,  
 They don't, little wretches, wear trowsers like  
 you!

But swear to me first,  
 That thy bosom hath nursed  
 No love of a mortal maid;  
 That no vow hath been spoken  
 That may not be broken—  
 Swear boldly, on thy blade!  
 Or else my charm shall shield thee not  
 Beneath old Ocean's furthest grot;  
 Though thou shouldst hide thee deeper there  
 Than spins the mariner's lead,  
 Where the great serpents writhe and glare,  
 And our boldest fear to tread;

Where Etna strikes her fiery fangs  
 A thousand miles below ;  
 Where foul Charybdis froths and clangs,  
 And wrecks wash to and fro ;  
 Or screen thee in the darkest ice  
 Where polar midnights frown ;  
 Aye, there, with hot and hungry eyes  
 Should Vengeance hunt thee down !  
 Ties like these we may not sever,  
 And a broken oath can be mended never.'

" O ! mad and fatal hour—I swore,  
 Aye, swore by knightly belt and spur,  
 That I had never loved before,  
 Nor pledged the hand I gave to her !  
 Ah ! Violet—sweet Violet !  
 If in their graves the dead can hear,  
 Forgive me—pity and forget  
 The sightless outcast mourning here !  
 The wretch that sapped thy beauty's bloom,  
 The wretch that hurled thee to the tomb,  
 The wretch that dared thy love to slight—  
 The perjured fiend—the recreant knight !

" I swore. She snatched my willing hand,  
 And flung the gauntlet on the grass :  
 ' As dies the foam-flake on the sand,  
 Earthly leaven part and pass !  
 Warrior, by the charm of power,  
 Strongest in this moonlight hour,  
 That hath yet the grasp of mortals  
 Ever defied ;

At whose voice the great sea-portals  
 Trembling divide;  
 By the spell that all obey  
 Under the sea,  
 Hold within thy breast of clay  
 Life such as we !  
 Take the breath and take the blood  
 Of the children of the flood:  
 Taking, plight thee, heart and hand,  
 To me, the Lady Oriande !

“ ‘Tis done ! the sluggish gales of earth  
 Are life no more to thee,  
 Thy world is now the ocean's girth,  
 Thine element the sea !  
 And, lo ! the moon begins to pale,  
 My men are clamorous in the dale.  
 Beyond our gates, by day or night,  
 They cannot live but in her light ;  
 Were but a cloud to cross the sky,  
 Many would faint, and some would die ;  
 Now the morning breaks indeed,  
 So mount thee on my fairy steed !’

“ No time was then to pause or think,—  
 Behind the bright Sea Queen  
 I sprang, and plunging o'er the brink,  
 We lit in the deep ravine.  
 Such a flight, and such a fall,  
 Had shivered steed of earthly stall  
 Into as many million bits,  
 As when the roaring bomb-shell splits.

Such a leap from such a crag,  
Had shamed the black-browed Indian's nag,  
That once at Shiraz—if, in sooth,  
Arabian legends hold the truth—  
Alive with clockwork soared away  
With Prince Firouz on New-year's day;  
For light as gossamer we fell,  
And landed scatheless in the dell.

“ Then all from up and down the glen  
Ran the dutiful fairy men;  
Such joy was their's their Queen to see,  
Scarcely one of them looked at me;  
For each had a wreath or a daisy-chain,  
To hang about her palfrey's mane.  
Poor little fellows, they valued more  
The silliest flower that blooms ashore,  
Than heaped sea-wealth, and in their eyes  
Thistle and river-flag waved a prize,  
And daisies each a twinkling gem,  
Fit for their Queen's own diadem!

“ From the far stables of the sea  
Another steed they led for me—  
A spotless filly, white as milk,  
With tail and mane like amber silk;  
And loud and long with joy they cried  
When they beheld me vault astride.  
In curious crowds they pressed around,  
And how they prattled when they found  
That I was all from shot and stab  
Shelled and guarded, like a crab!

Yet more, far more than all the rest,  
They wondered at my horse-tail crest;  
At every nod they laughed again,  
'Till the owls answered from the glen;  
But when, in sport, I drew my sword,  
They gave me up and fairly roared.

“Then cried their Queen, ‘The night is past,  
The orient lights are breaking;  
Stars and moon are paling fast,  
And the sons of men are waking.  
The fresh south-wind of morning tells;  
Their hymn the birds begin;  
My children, sound upon your shells,  
To call the stragglers in!’

“To every crag and cleft around  
Warbling bugles tossed the sound;  
From crag and cleft and woods and wave,  
A hundred voices answer gave,  
For some were lost the trees among,  
And some had climbed the cliffs and hung  
On juts and points, like samphire-men,  
And durst not clamber down again;  
And some, alas! that in their glee  
Had gone birds'-nesting up a tree,  
Gave answer none, for then and there  
Detected in the act they were,  
Their little hands yoke-dabbled all,  
Their pockets crammed with fledglings small,  
And straightway, spite of sobs and howls,  
Lynched by the grave, offended owls.

A low-browed cavern's massive arch  
 Slowly gorged our swarming march;  
 Far down its throat as eyes could see  
 Thronged the small people of the sea,  
 Each with his tiny lamp held high—  
 Midmost Oriande and I.  
 At first our horses scarce could pass,  
 So rankly shot the mildewed grass,  
 So close the ribs of trickling stone,  
 So low the roof and fossil-grown.

“But soon the span grew high and wide,  
 Glistened the walls on either side;  
 Beneath us the expanding floor  
 Lay carpeted with shells and ore:  
 The rising dome at every turn  
 More gloriously began to burn;  
 Deep-set jewels felt the light—  
 Emerald green and diamond white  
 Trembled as the lamps went by;  
 Flashed the ruby's crimson eye,  
 Opal and amethyst caught fire,  
 Like frosty gems in midnight's tiar,  
 'Till all ray-tangled, warp and woof,  
 One hollow glory blazed the roof.

“And then before us, vast and dim,  
 Loomed the great gates of Earth and Sea;  
 Half-lighted burnt their brazen rim  
 With sliding gleams as on came we.  
 Giants of brass, that bar the way  
 From this warm world and light of day,

To those calm vallies fathomless,  
Above whose dreamy loveliness  
The purple waves for ever sweep,  
Still floats the great eternal deep.

“Unearthly were the hands I ween  
That cast and carved that ponderous screen ;  
Embodyings of no mortal thought  
The signs upon those portals wrought.  
Such gates perchance were those of old,  
If rightly be the story told,  
Fashioned by Merlin’s weary slaves  
In Dynevor’s volcanic caves,  
When furnace-fires brake nightly out,  
And nightly rang the clank and shout,  
As fiend-swung hammers rose and fell  
To fence Cairmardin citadel.  
But what the symbol’s burning mould,  
And what the winding scroll-work told,  
And what the words that must be said  
Ere you should see those doors unwed,  
Are secrets dear as those which break  
Through dying lips for conscience sake—  
Aye, smile, and doubt such goblin-lore,  
If you knew all—you would know more.

“But now before us filed aside,  
Behold the foremost ranks divide,  
On either hand their lamps they swing,  
On either hand their bells they ring,  
On either hand their throats they strain  
’Till the red cavern shakes again;

And, as we ride their lines between,  
Shout welcome to their matchless Queen !

“ ‘ Fling backward the gates of the Sea !  
Our glorious Queen draws near ;  
Steel-clad warrior ! fearless be  
With her to enter here.  
Fling backward the gates of the Sea !

“ ‘ The trees and the wind and the moon,  
Right wonderful things are they,  
But better breathe *wæ* in the pearly noon  
Of our ocean’s boundless day !  
Fling backward the gates of the Sea !

“ ‘ The lamps of the bridal are lit—  
The bride and her bridegroom are here—  
Their hot steeds eagerly champ the bit  
Until the path be clear !  
Fling backward the gates of the Sea ! ”

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Thus far the legend, vaguely told,  
With bitter jest and lightless mirth,  
Such as are their’s who tales unfold,  
They fain would hide from Heaven and earth,  
Yet cannot stifle, conscience-wrung,  
The babbling fiend that goads the tongue.  
Brief was the silence ere again  
Resumed the patriarch of the glen.



## CANTO II.

“ Oh! man, thou tyrant o’er the patient land,  
 Where all is thine, to carve—to change—to reap!  
 For whom the elements toil hand in hand,  
 For whom the counted planets nightly sweep;  
 Come down with me upon the frontier sand,  
 And gaze upon the calm, imperial deep!  
 Teach me his wonders—thou whose daring eyes  
 Unravel all the secret of the skies!

“ He mocks thee with that glittering, heaving veil;  
 He laughs to scorn thy prying and thy pains:  
 Above a world those waters proudly sail,  
 Thrice broader than thy green earth’s rich do-  
 mains;  
 A world of wonders—whence each plunging gale  
 Drives up some shining marvel! What remains?  
 What waste, ungarnered wealth—what realms of spoil?  
 Thy vaunted power and skill to tempt—and foil!

“ He bears thy ships, but not as bears the slave:  
 He is thy friend, or foe—he fears thee not.  
 Beneath his blue unfathomable wave,  
 Thou art not monarch of one inch-wide plot:  
 He yields thee nothing—save a boundless grave,  
 Where the gray bones of myriads blanch forgot,  
 ’Till Earth’s thick tombs and Ocean’s darkling bed  
 Alike shall render up their trust of dead.

" But now return with me to pass  
 Those twin stupendous gates of brass,  
 That never yet their cumbrous pride  
 To mortal man had wheeled aside.  
 A hundred hands each portal swung,  
 The brazen axles groaned and rung,  
 In stately strength invincible,  
 To all but that commanding spell:  
 Until at last, as in the Spring,  
 When woodsman hatchets glance and ring,  
 Before the biting, hateful axe  
 Some forest-monarch nods and cracks,  
 'Till, downward, with a sudden roar,  
 Crashing he goes, to bloom no more,  
 So, backward hurled with furious clang,  
 Those everlasting barriers rang,  
     And, trembling in the gap,  
 Blue endless lengths of landscape haze  
 Burst on my blank astounded gaze,  
 Fanned with such breath as lingering strays,  
 Towards the calm death of rosy days,  
     O'er Spring's own violet lap!

" But, on—press on! with clattering feet  
 The marble path our palfries beat;  
 The clashing doors behind us close,  
 But lovelier yet the picture glows,  
 And fresher still the breezes sweep,  
 And madlier still my pulses leap!  
 What care I for the world above,  
 Or wealth, or life, or woman's love,

“ With that fair thing beside me riding,  
With that rich dream around me cast—  
Behind, those gallant gates dividing  
THIS from the tame, unworthy past !

“ She whispered much—those regal eyes  
Down-shining on her horse’s mane,  
But I was gazing on the skies,  
And answered scarce a word again.

“ Even as when some lover greets,  
In the long twilight garden-walk,  
A promised bride—his bosom beats,  
He clasps her hand and hears her talk :

“ And yet an idle answer gives,  
In broken phrase at random shot,  
While she within whose glance he lives  
In that full joy seems all forgot.

“ So I, from whose irresolute breast  
One smile of her’s all else had driven,  
Scarce heeded though by lips addressed,  
For which the world I just had given.

“ Well might my senses yield in truth,  
Amid a scene so strange ;  
Well might the pulses of my youth  
Leap at each magic change !  
Each wonder of the ocean-sky,  
That over all hung bright and high,

A living sphere shot through and through  
 With changing rays of gorgeous hue,  
 Now rosy pink—now richly blue—  
 Now, all its colours fused anew,  
     A dome of emerald glass;  
 Whilst ever through the vaulted height  
 Sheet-lightning gleams broke thick and bright,  
 Quick as athwart some August night  
     The fire-fly meteors pass!

“ And see, within its round expanse,  
 What myriad beings dart and glance!  
 Far, far above our upturned eyes,  
 They poise, and wheel, and swoop, and rise,  
 Some sheathed in mail—some soaring dark,  
 Some every scale a golden spark—  
 A thousand hands point out the shark,  
     The condor of the sea!  
 There sweeps the dolphin’s radiant pride,  
 And there the bold sea-swordsmen ride,  
 And there the clouded mackerel glide  
     In some dusk mountain’s lee.  
 They flit among the coral-woods  
     That, half-way up the sky,  
 So proudly toss their jewelled hoods  
     As the slow tide sweeps by:  
 Some that hoar-sparkling branch and blow,  
 Like ancient forests bowed with snow,  
 Some drenched with such sweet rosy glow  
     As floods the hawthorn spray,  
 When sap of April’s fairy blood

Stirs warm within the small red bud,  
 And lights a thousand stars to stud  
     The garland of a day !  
 Around each knotted mountain-base  
     Trail flowers of tender bloom,  
 Their loving tendrils twine and lace,  
 Each breathing in a sister's face  
     Her amorous perfume ;  
 Some clinging to the wet rock's edge,  
 Some clambering up a dizzy ledge,  
 Some deepening with a golden hedge  
     A cavern's lonely gloom.  
 And sunny shells glide everywhere,  
     Along the moist red sand ;  
 Oh, Sea ! if half thy wonders were  
 But known to men of upper air,  
 With me amid thy vallies fair  
     How gladly would they stand !

" But, on—press on ! before us burn  
     The deep sea's purple towers ;  
 The crowd that wait their Queen's return  
     Have strewn our path with flowers.  
 With radiant eyes they meet us,  
     As we ride the archway through ;  
 With ringing cheers they greet us,  
     From loyal hearts and true :  
 You might have heard a league away  
     The shouting in the squares,  
 That told of our dismounting  
     Before the palace stairs.

“ And now within the pillared hall,  
Behold the wedding banquet set;  
Ten thousand merry elvesmen small  
Around the glittering tables met;  
The ocean Queen and I alone,  
Apart upon our ample throne,  
Beneath a tented canopy,  
Heavy with gorgeous blazonry  
And jewels from the central zone.

“ How bright she looked ! oh, how I hung  
On the low music of her tongue !  
How fiercely, whispering at her side,  
Ran love’s tumultuous drowning tide !  
What words were mine I know not now,  
What fond renewal, vow on vow,  
Of one sweet oath—what eager claim  
To hear those lips repeat my name :  
No matter—be it prose or rhyme,  
In every age, in every clime,  
A lover’s talk is much the same.

“ With jovial sound  
The bowls went round  
Beneath us at the board,  
'Till many a little graceless rogue  
Lay chattering out a tipsy brogue,  
Or slumbered fairly floored.  
No doubt their Queen was wearied well  
With so much courting at a spell,

For, beckoning to her side  
 An ancient harper of the Sea,  
 She bade him sound, with all his pride,  
 A song wherein no love should be.

“ Strange was his mien, that reverend seer’s,  
 Along whose brow uncounted years  
 Had strewn their tribute snow.  
 Some said within his awful brain  
 Futurity lay clear and plain,  
 Mapped out for joy or woe:  
 But all were sure that, since his birth,  
 He knew the changes of the earth,  
 The mysteries of the deep;  
 Had heard, while yet in manhood’s noon,  
 The waste volcanoes of the moon  
 Thunder themselves to sleep.  
 With square and compass could he trace  
 Each blasting comet’s fiery race,  
 And measure out the year  
 To each revolving planet-star,  
 From the red sun’s last furnace-bar  
 To Saturn’s belted sphere.  
 He loved to sing the ways of men,  
 Their deeds and dreams—as we  
 Still chronicle with dreary pen  
 Dry legends of the sea.  
 The glittering harp-strings boldly rang,  
 And thus old ocean’s Nestor sang:—

*The Islands of the Blest.*

Isles of the blest ! what visions bright  
Were his who, glorious hopes divining,  
Sang first of a far fairy-light  
Along the dusk Atlantic shining !

Of Isles from earth far-parted  
By the rolling barrier-wave,  
Where the generous and true-hearted  
Live on beyond the grave ;

Where the sage may rest from dreaming,  
And the warrior rest from strife,  
And the rich man rest from scheming,  
And the poor man rest from life !

When the wind was blowing gaily,  
And the waves were bursting free,  
Around the shining islands  
Of the blue Atlantic sea,  
O, many a time, rock-seated,  
Have I with harp in hand  
Struck up a jolly roundelay  
To greet that happy band,  
'Till down came half Elysium  
To dance upon the sand ;  
And godlike men and heroes  
Went by with prouder tread,  
To hear me sing how gratefully  
The living love the dead :



How fathers take their little ones  
To touch the patriot's urn,  
Who cry and tremble as they ask,  
‘But when will he return—  
The man that was so good to us,  
Oh, father, where is he?’  
‘My children, blessed for ever,  
Far, far beyond the sea!  
Not the gods that live in heaven,  
To whom our eyes we turn,—  
When all the world is praising them,  
And all their altars burn,  
Are blest as he whose ashes lie  
So still in yonder urn.  
Then think of him, my children,  
And ask him day and night,  
To speed you in the forum  
And guard you in the fight;  
And hold this truth for ever,  
When Death has knocked for me,  
True heirs are they of Freedom  
Who are fathers of the free!’

But hark! what awful whisper  
Comes hovering o'er the sea,  
That echoes up the mountains  
And booms along the lea?  
The whirling dance is broken  
And the laughter heard no more,  
And not a word is spoken  
As they gather on the shore.  
The first who hear that summons—

I know their faces well—  
 Are those who down in Marathon  
 So sternly fought and fell ;  
 When all the Great King's army  
 Came down to chain the free,  
 And Europe stood with Asia,  
 Face to face beside the sea.

That wild September sunrise !  
 The doom of kings unborn  
 Hung balanced in thy stormy light,  
 Thou memorable morn !  
 Those endless hordes descending !  
 E'en now I see them sweep  
 Down where the ranks of Athens  
 Their own free causeway keep !  
 In vain, with dust and thunder,  
 Each fiery charge is rolled,  
 Stout hearts are in those kneeling squares,  
 Strong shepherds keep the fold ;  
 On the firm fringe of lances  
 The battle beats in vain,  
 Though Khorassan's wild horsemen  
 Come down with flying rein,  
 Though fierce Caucasian clansmen  
 Their ponderous maces ply,  
 And sheaves of Indian arrows  
 Drive whistling through the sky !  
 And now the scales are turning—  
 'No longer stand at bay !  
 Up, eager sons of Athens !  
 Plateæans, clear the way !

Charge where they launch the gallies !  
 Charge ! Fire them on the shore !  
 The slaves of King Darius  
 Shall see his face no more !'

Thus fell these hero conquerors  
 That pass before me now ;  
 'Twas thus they won the laurel  
 That blooms on every brow,  
 'Twas thus they won the noble praise  
 That men shall still repeat,  
 Whilst yet Macaria's fountain plays  
 And freeborn pulses beat,  
 With hymns in every temple  
 And songs at every feast,  
 ' They kept the gates of Europe  
 Against the slavish East !'

Hush ! hoarser grows the whisper  
 That booms along the shore—  
 They know the furious music  
 Of a battle's distant roar.  
 Half-heard, the well-known war-cry  
 Of Persia sweeps the main,  
 And, maddening at the sound, they ask,  
 ' Can we have died in vain ?  
 Can once again the Tyrant  
 Have swooped when we are gone,  
 And all the land be crying  
 For us to lead them on ?

No, no ! our sons are fighting  
To-day in yonder field ;  
Our names will be their watchword,  
Our sons will never yield !

Slow fails the roar of battle  
Along the listening sea :  
Now who shall tell these conquerors  
If still their Greece be free ?  
Lo ! specked in the blue distance,  
Whilst every heart is dumb  
With sick and painful hoping,  
The phantom gallies come :  
The ships that on the battle-eve  
Bear home the glorious dead,  
Who for their own dear father-land  
Their blood have bravely shed.

The eyes of good Callimachus  
Have caught the signal first,  
And, oh ! the shout of thunder  
That up the blue sky burst !  
' They come, they come from victory !  
They wave their hands on high ;  
Hark, they are shouting ' SALAMIS !'  
See how their standards fly !  
Joy, brethren ! spread the banquet,  
And tear the myrtle down,  
That each true patriot yonder  
May wear the deathless crown !'

Such, Queen of the deep ocean,  
Was the vision seen by me,  
Amid the shining islands  
Of the blue Atlantic sea.

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“Clashed the last rounding chords and all  
Fell silent in the deep-sea hall,  
Save where a knot of critic elves  
Discussed the tale among themselves.  
The sager few, with tongue in cheek,  
Pronounced it veritable Greek;  
The rest, less wise, fought inch by inch,  
To make their various versions clinch;  
Twisted the text—tried high and low,  
Turned the conundrum to and fro,  
Strove hard to blunder into sense,  
Said their antagonists were ‘dense,’  
Enforced the charge with rude grimaces,  
And ultimately slapped their faces.

“From song, and glare, and lamps, and wine,  
We passed. A stately platform-way,  
With solemn urns and marble kings,  
That ruled of old the salt-sea springs,  
In deep red calm of evening lay—  
And she was there, and she was mine!

“From his cold granite pedestal,  
There was no statue of them all  
But on us looked with awful eyes,  
And from the crimson ocean-skies

Caught shade and light alternately,  
One almost heard them breathe and sigh.

“ Gently she spoke, ‘ The deed is done  
That shuts thee out from earth and sun,  
And thou hast dared, for love of me,  
To pass down under the vaulted sea.

“ ‘ I said our hearts were fearless here,  
I thought so till to-day,  
But the coyest girl on earth might sneer,  
To see me now repay  
So coldly and so bashfully,  
What thou hast done so gallantly.  
I know not why. From pole to pole  
The torn white waters race and roll ;  
From ice to ice the depths are mine,  
As princess of my father’s line,  
With sand, and shells, and rocks, and flowers,  
And vassal elves and marble towers.  
Why should I fear lest thou shouldst be  
Less happy and less blest than we ?

“ ‘ For us, the Children of the Foam,  
We love our boundless ocean-home ;  
Seldom we pass the midway pales,  
That bar from earth our fairy-dales,  
Nor care to ask what joys are theirs,  
Self-styled Creation’s foremost heirs.

“ ‘ And yet we feel that prouder claims,  
And wiser thoughts, and loftier aims,

And clearer views, and mightier powers,  
 May make their lot more blest than ours ;  
 And half I fear, lest when the gloss  
     Of this new scene hath worn away,  
 That thou shouldst only count the loss,  
     And hate the doom that bids thee stay,  
 And spurn the lightly-given hand  
 Of the unhappy Oriande !

“ ‘ Yet blame her not : it is not here,  
 Within the round sea’s vaulted sphere,  
 Grand though it be, this ardent breast  
 Could slumber on the shelves of rest.  
 No—something told and tells me still,  
 My heart hath yet to drink its fill  
 Of soul-springs deep with hope and love,  
 And high thoughts only felt above !  
 For this I pant, and day by day,  
 Thirst vainly for the kindling ray  
 That yet may teach me how to feel,  
 For what to wish—to whom to kneel ;  
 To be as those to whom ’tis given,  
 To bear on earth a soul from Heaven !  
 That were a prize . . . and, it is told,  
 The love of one of mortal mould  
 May raise us in the golden scale ;<sup>1</sup>  
 And I would rise : the very gale

<sup>1</sup> “ Now the race to which I belong, have no other means of obtaining a soul, than by forming with an individual of your own, the most intimate union of love. I am now possessed of a soul. . . .”—UNDINE.

That kissed me in its morning race,  
 And blew my hair about my face,  
 Vexed me with whispers: yes, it said  
 Even they are better who are dead  
 Than thus as I, and down the glen,  
 Went buoyant with the souls of men.  
 Whom have I here to whom this heart  
 Aught of its burden may impart?  
 Who that can hope or strive with me,  
 Or frame one wish beyond the sea,  
 Or dare assert that Ocean's birth  
 May peer with men that walk the earth—  
 Formed by the self-same hand as they—  
 Find out the path and force the way?  
 Not one! their hearts are loyal all,  
 Who shout within yon crystal hall;  
 I love them well—and there we end—  
 I have no hope—no faith—no friend!

“ ‘By every Saint, sweet Oriande,’  
 I said, ‘By earth no more my own,  
 I would not yield this dear young hand,  
 To lounge upon an Indian throne!  
 Talk not of less to one whose trade  
 Was only wrought by lance and blade,  
 Heir to no costlier heritage  
 Than on a die's cast might one gage,  
 And laugh to lose: without one tie  
 To curb his rash knight-errantry.  
 The sage upon his turret-height  
 Scans the slow changes of the night,  
 And, stripped of all his darling stars,  
 Would quickly grin through Bedlam-bars;—



The schoolman o'er the dusty page,  
 Lashes his flanks in critic rage—  
 The alchemist, with bootless toil,  
 Hears only his alembic boil—  
 The lawyer cares but for his fee,  
 The merchant but for ships at sea :  
 Rob them of these and they are lost,  
 Their life's one aim for ever crossed !  
 But *I* was trained a soldier rough,  
 Nor ever yet knew change enough !  
 I, to whose life as breath and food  
 Comes wild adventure's wildest mood,  
 Should I repent me of a deed,

Which to have done there's not a knight,  
 But would have given both lance and steed,  
 Aye, casque and spurs with all delight ?  
 No, Oriande, 'tis early yet  
 To talk of losses or regret.'

“ Brightly she smiled, her sweet face lit  
 With one rich glow of trust and love;  
 And now beside us glancing flit,  
 In shadow of the towers above,  
 Young nymphs who come their Queen to claim,  
 And half in sport and half in shame,  
 Hint slyly at the Love-god's flame.  
 Ask me no more—a dizzy mist  
 Hides all, if aught indeed I wist,  
 Till they restored her bashful charms,  
 To a delighted bridegroom's arms !

## CANTO III.

“What hope is their’s who wander to and fro,  
In vain wide search of legendary bliss?  
The Golden Age was worn out long ago,  
There’s precious little chance for one in *this* ;  
Where, all alike, men walk in a vain show,  
And laugh to see some luckless brother miss  
His fondest aim and hope, and pass him by,  
When even a rough crocodile might cry.

“What hope is their’s who snatch with lawless clutch  
That Proteus, pleasure, and that phantom, gain?  
Who deem that Life being shortened over-much,  
They farm it best who ride with a loose rein?  
Alas, their hands but mildew all they touch,  
Till the roused Fates, that never wake in vain,  
Come pouncing down upon them, torch in claw,  
Shreeves of the grand Eumenidean law!

“What hope is their’s who, when they gain their end,  
With high unflinching daring stand elate;  
Disdain beneath eternal rules to bend,  
And boldly draw the sword, and fence with Fate?  
Who hug the dangerous prize—their deeds defend,  
And answer the accuser hate for hate?  
Brave worms that blindly rearing in the dust,  
The stern revolving wheel would backward thrust!”

Vague words like these—half muttered, half sup-  
 pressed,  
 Broke thro' the bearded lips of that gray sire;  
 And then a great sigh shook his aged breast,  
 And his blind eyes burnt each a point of fire,  
 And, as the red sun fell along the west,  
 Flooding with crimson light each flinty spire,  
 And the first owl whooped from the darkening tree,  
 Urged once again the wonders of the sea.

“Glorious days that, gone for ever,  
 Haunt me still with lingering light,  
 Like those airy scenes that fever  
 Dreaming brains with vain delight—  
 Scenes that we would cling to, waking,  
 That we loose with passionate pain,  
 When we find the dull day breaking  
 Up the cold white window-pane!—  
 Glorious days along whose track  
 The wretched night rides doubly black,  
 Days no more for me that shine,  
 Let me feel ye once were mine!

“Vain the wish! for firm and fast,  
 Fenced and locked and doubly barred,  
 Stand the gates that o'er the Past—  
 Trodden once—keep ruthless guard.

“Memory peeps through chink and joint,  
 Sees the steep way wind and turn.  
 All the guide-boards one way point:—  
 ‘Forward,’ still their legend stern.

“None go back, and last night’s halt  
Is as far from us, to-day,  
As is the rim of the blue sky-vault  
Beyond the sun’s last fainting ray.

“So be it then: and let me seem  
But as a child that tells it’s dream,  
Or crazy graybeard, cracked with age,  
Drivelling of manhood’s lusty rage,  
Firm on his audience to inflict  
What none believe—or contradict.

“I envy such, whose draught of bliss,  
So graciously withdrawn,  
Just leaves uncloyed the goblet’s kiss,  
Without the racks of morn.  
But I that curse and grind my teeth  
To think of days gone by,—  
Can Heaven above or earth beneath  
Find rest for such as I?

“Far from the giddy throng ’twas ours  
To haunt alone the waving bowers;  
To wander on through lanes of shade,  
Where the red forest rolled and swayed,  
Showering its leaves; or idly pause  
Beneath some cavern’s flinty jaws;  
And lingering there, alone with love,  
Talk of the crowded world above.

“I see her still, as at my feet  
She used to sit with look so sweet;

Her small hands clasped about my knee,  
 Her thoughtful blue eyes fixed on me,—  
 'Till in their very innocence,  
 They grew a weight on every sense,  
 Striking thro' mine: I never knew  
 'Till her's I saw, what eyes could do!

“ Then would she ask with childlike glee,  
 For news of earth beyond the sea;  
 Yes, news of every kind and sort,  
 And if we had a Queen at court?  
 And how she looked, and how she dressed,  
 And if she always praised the best?

“ Alas! she wondered—well she might—  
 To find so little in a knight.  
 ‘ What! carve at meals, and dance in hall,  
 And groom a charger in the stall,’  
 She said, ‘ why this can scarce be all?  
 This *we* can do, and surely they  
 Who bask amid the smiles of day,  
 And bear a soul in every breast,  
 Know more than we:—you only jest.  
 But ah, I too,’ she blushing cried,  
 Her downcast eyes half turned aside,  
 ‘ Have now a soul, oh boundless prize!  
 Tell me of prayers that reach the skies:  
 Teach me, for this at least you know—  
 How best one's thanks to Heaven may go;  
 What least provokes its angry frown,  
 And calls the kindest answer down!’

“‘ Alas !’ I said, ‘ our priests themselves  
 Keep mouldy books on mouldier shelves,  
 Which—so they say—much lore contain,  
 And might—God knows—make all things plain.  
 And yet I’m certain in my heart,  
 There isn’t one who knows his part ;  
 But what they *do* you’d scarce believe,—  
 I only know, one Christmas eve,  
 They tied our parson to a stick,  
 And burnt him for a heretic.  
 Some say that better times are come,  
 And that a book that’s long been dumb,  
 Speaks peace to all ;—I hope ’tis true,  
 I’d burn no mortal—save a Jew.  
 But whilst our loose church-weathercock  
 Veers only to mislead the flock,  
 A man’s a fool to risk his hide,  
 And so my creed’s grown rather wide !’  
 ‘ Can men,’ she murmured, ‘ be so mad ?  
 O, this is very strange and sad.’

“ Yet think not that such idlesse light,  
 Alone beguiled time’s easy flight.  
 No, right and left our path lay free,  
 Through all the labyrinths of the sea.  
 Now, with a band of hardy elves,  
 I scaled the savage mountain-shelves ;  
 And up, and up, and up, we clomb,  
 To hear the breakers howl and foam,  
 And the desolate storm-wind shriek and yell  
 To the slow sad clang of the light-house bell.

Now northward wandering rose we where  
No life-sound stirs in the darkling air,  
But crouched upon his Arctic throne,  
Death holds his midnight court, alone.  
There spreads the plain of the printless snow,  
Just as it fell, long ages ago ;  
And the shivering frost-fires wave and stream,  
And the ice-crags laugh in their ghastly gleam,  
And venturous mariners' teeth 'tis told  
Come chattering out of their gums with cold,  
And faces are shrivelled like apples in May,  
And frost-bitten fingers snap crackling away ;  
And the red blood clots in a pulseless mass,  
On the rim of the circle that none may pass.

Or far and away in the Indian sea,  
On the warm tropic nights, when the countless lights  
Of ocean flashed incessantly,  
We would climb to the brow of some coral isle,  
Some wonderful, glittering ivory pile,  
Plumed with proud young cocoa-nut trees,  
Swinging and laughing in every breeze,  
As if it were something one's leaves to toss  
Under the light of the Southern Cross !  
And there would we sit in our blithe retreat,  
Till the skies grew red with morning heat,  
And angrily scattering sparks and flame,  
Out of the ocean the broad sun came.

“ Or would we watch the strong ships dashing  
High overhead through the wind-white foam ;  
The mad waves over their broad bows flashing,  
Steadily bound for a distant home.

“ Some bore fruits of a wealthy region,  
Sheaves of silk, and clots of ore ;  
Some were of War’s wild sea-legion,  
Eager to smite upon wave or shore.

“ Fleets beneath whose graceful wings  
Slept the fire that shakes the world ;  
That ‘ last argument of kings,’  
Through all time so rashly hurled.

“ We saw that huge Armada sweep,  
Three hundred years ago,  
Whose shadow darkened half the deep,  
And ‘ woe to England—woe !’  
Its priestly watchword heard we blown  
From rear to van in a priestly tone,  
‘ For God hath made our cause his own !’

“ Down came the ships of England,  
Their decks were dumb as death,  
No cry was there, but a sailor’s prayer  
In every deep-drawn breath :  
No shout until stout Effingham  
Cried, ‘ Britons, win the day !  
God and the Queen !’ and then I ween,  
A hundred miles away  
The ringing cheer a man might hear,  
That told the fight begun,  
As loudly broke white floods of smoke  
From every furious gun—



As at each blast a Spanish mast  
Went reeling by the board,  
And momentarily more fierce and fast  
The driving shot-storm roared !

“ ‘ Fight, Spaniards ! fight, Lepanto-men !  
Remember Corinth-bay !  
Fight, stormers of the sea-wolf den !  
God fight for Spain to-day !’

“ No ! vain the shout. That fleet of pride  
Shall ne'er again in roadstead ride,  
Nor lord it on the deep.  
With sails shot loose and standards struck,  
Crushed in one wild tumultuous ruck,  
They press like hunted sheep ;  
'Till yelling from our darkest caves,  
Rushed all the ruin of the waves,  
At His high voice who reared of old  
This Isle of England—Freedom's hold,  
And bade her sons be strong in fight,  
And firm in faith, and wise in might,  
To win their walls of roaring foam  
A prouder name—the Exile's home.

“ Enough—and more ! O, trust them not,  
Who teach that Pleasure's blithest round  
Can ever clear one conscience-blot,  
Or dull one still accusing sound ;  
Or charm the weary curse away,  
The blight upon our pathway-ground,  
The rainless cloud that hides the day,  
From which our very prayers rebound.

The shadow that so slowly grew,  
We recked not of its broadening span ;  
Who ever in the morning knew  
How first some ominous dream began ?

“ By night there stood my couch beside  
A shrouded form with golden hair ;  
By day I watched it softly glide,  
A shade upon the windless air.  
The step—the form, too well I knew,  
And, oh ! dishonoured and untrue,  
I vainly strove with curse and frown  
To beat the mournful phantom down :  
To drain the wine-can with a laugh,  
And say—‘ She was too soft by half !  
Others have borne such jilt, and she  
Need surely ne’er have died for me.’

“ Ah, blinded fool ! what man may bide  
Between the moon and rising tide,  
And thunder to the marching sea  
Words that may make him turn and flee ?  
Yet sooner should those headlong waves  
Reel humbly back, like beaten slaves,  
Than stern Remorse her task unlearn,—  
The slow, sure foot of Vengeance turn !  
It came at last ! In mercy spare  
The sight—the horror—the despair !  
Enough, that it was Violet !  
Enough ? ah, no ! ’till I forget  
The flutter of that coarse black pall,  
The look—the tones—that told me all !

“ That night—it was a custom old  
That all the viceroys of the Sea  
Should, once a year, high banquet hold,  
And join in Ocean revelry—  
That night our palace windows flung  
A fourfold blaze the waves among ;  
Within, the tables cracked with gold,  
The torches waved—the music rolled,  
Aladdin’s tower or Sinbad’s dale,  
Heaped ankle-deep with diamond hail,  
Were dim to that vast vaulted hall,  
Lit for a grand sea-festival.

“ In royal beauty flushed with pride,  
Beside me sat my queenly bride.  
Too well she knew some secret pain  
Racked my crushed heart—and long in vain  
Had worked with Love’s own tenderness,  
To make the weary burden less.  
Ah ! double bitterness ! I knew  
She thought I pined for Earth’s green hue,  
For friends long left ; herself no more  
The prized—the beautiful of yore.  
There is not in the arrow-sheaf  
Of black Remorse, a sharper grief  
Than that which stings us when we know  
Some loving bosom bleeds with woe,  
Caught from our own—accusing still  
Itself half author of the ill,  
While we to soothe at least *its* pain,  
Strive with our sin-locked lips in vain.

" And when the halls were cleared for wine,  
 And the loud horn-peals blithely rang,  
 I felt a timid hand on mine,  
 Alas, its very touch a pang !  
 As if unconscious of my woe,  
 Although her own sweet eyes were wet,  
 She spoke, she smiled—as hoping so  
 To cheat me of some fond regret.  
 Ah, trusting, lovely Oriande !  
 Such memories as these with me,  
 Strike sharper than the fury-band  
 That pay my broken oath to thee !  
 And then when jovial glees were roared  
 From mouth to mouth around the board,  
 As if before a flowing lay  
 Trouble and care must melt away,  
 She beckoned to her side  
 That ancient harper of the Sea,  
 And bade him sound, with all his pride,  
 A song that all of Love should be !

" Strange were the chords that, sharp and bold,  
 Clashed from the shivering strings of gold,  
 And sudden silence fell  
 On all the tables of the feast—  
 Laughter and jest and music ceased  
 As at some wizard spell.  
 Like the dead lull it seemed when stirs  
 No spire of all the mountain firs  
 Beneath a gathering sky,  
 The calm that in a moment more  
 Rings to the storm's advancing roar,  
 As the first lightnings fly.

And shuddering in my guilt, I knew  
 That every eye the wide hall through  
 At once was turned on me,  
 And in the dying of those chords,  
 Flashed through me like a thousand swords,—  
 ‘Of Love my song shall be!’  
 The prophet-harper sternly said,  
 ‘A funeral dirge for Love the dead,  
 Sung under the salt sea.’

\* \* \* \*

“’Tis told! I heard, yet heard it not—  
 The strain harp-thundered sharp and hot,  
 The bloodhound bay that tracked me down,  
 From Earth and knighthood’s lost renown,  
 To double perjury, and there  
 Laid my last hideous treason bare!

“Then with confusion’s clamour shook  
 The startled halls. I saw no more—  
 Hiding my eyes lest they should look  
 On her whose bright, brief dream was o’er.  
 Who dragged me forth her throne before  
 I know not—shuddering at a sound  
 Of thunder thrilled the marble floor,  
 And rang the purple panes around.

“Pale, bloodless like a marble form,  
 She stood—around her hushed the storm,  
 ’Till from her lips each syllable  
 Upon these ears a fire-drop fell.

'Not mine the doom,' she slowly said,  
 'That lights upon thy shameless head.  
 Not mine the laws that warn thee hence  
 Beyond our Ocean's outmost fence,  
 To purge, in penitence and pain,  
 Thy bosom of this burning stain.  
 The stern old statutes of the sea  
 Leave, here, no two-way path for me.  
 Go forth, and, sworn upon the sun  
     To look no more, in blindness go:  
 Think upon those thou hast undone,  
     And share their bitter draught of woe.  
 Go forth! To speak of pardon here  
     Were idle, but while hope remains,  
 Let penance work thy spirit clear,  
     And lonely vigils cleanse thy veins.  
 It may be there are days in store  
 That still may link with days of yore;  
 It may be—ah, to Heaven atone,  
 Nor plead there for thyself alone!'

"Poor child! she could no more repress  
 Her bursting heart's great bitterness.  
 The queen-like mien, the tones were gone,  
 Weeping she sank my breast upon;  
 'O, more than half the fault was mine?'  
 She said—'yet what a doom is thine!  
 Forgive me—no! then hate me not,  
 Who share in heart at least thy lot;  
 The deepest draught in Sorrow's well  
 Henceforth is mine as thine—farewell!'

“ So broke the morning of my dream ;  
I heard the brazen gates clash fast ;  
I stood beside the fairy-stream  
And knew that all but pain was past.

“ Since then what waste of years hath run  
I ill can tell—they pass me by  
With barren change of frost and sun ;  
Years are for those that live and die.

“ I hoped at first : I hope no more.  
Yet, raft-rocked on a burning sea,  
The death-struck sailor dreams of shore,  
And so it often is with me.

“ Would it were else ! that grace were mine  
These rusting links at once to sever,  
To bid my soul no longer pine,  
When the Gates of the Ocean are fast for ever !”

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Meanwhile the climbing moon had gained  
Her place on Heaven's deserted throne,  
And the deep river, silver-veined,  
Like sparkling lava moved and shone.  
A death-like silence held the trees ;  
A charm came o'er the glittering night :  
Believe or doubt me—which you please,  
I heard the cold stars blinking bright.

But, hark! a round of magic bells,  
A chaunt amid the willows ringing,  
A long triumphant blast of shells,  
A swarm of lamps blue sparkles flinging!  
The river has turned in his haunted bed,  
And backward winds to his fountain head,  
The fluttering leaves on each trembling tree  
Have caught the breath of the distant sea,  
The cliffs are echoing stone by stone,  
The call of the bugle so clearly blown.

The first light notes had scarcely died,  
Ere burst the old man from my side;  
“Huzza, the bugles of the Sea!  
There—there again! they sound for Me!  
Now, Heaven be thanked!”

No more he said,

But headlong in the river-bed  
Plunged as he spoke: a joyous cry  
Shook shore and water, trees and sky,  
I saw the flashing lamps descend,  
I heard a roar of “*Bring your friend!*”  
“No, thank you—no! Excuse me, pray!”  
I loudly answered—“not to-day!”  
And starting backward as I spoke,  
Sprawled headlong o’er the fallen oak!





**PART II.**

**LEAVES FROM THE ARABIAN  
NIGHTS.**

**Publica materies privati juris erit, si  
Nec circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem ;  
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus  
Interpres.**

•• The Author reserves to himself the right of publishing a translation of the remainder of this work in the Chinese language.

\*.\* Many of the allusions in the following magazine-pieces will strike the reader as rather stale. I have not, however, thought it worth while to make alterations, excepting, of course, such as could be effected 'transverso calamo.'

# THE LITTLE HUNCHBACK.

## A TALE OF CASGAR.<sup>1</sup>

CASGAR. Turbans everywhere. Turbans I say.  
Upstairs and downstairs and over the way.  
Turbans of every conceivable hue,  
(To start *à la* Dickens) old Turbans and new,  
Scarlet and orange and indigo blue.  
Come, don't contradict me! Because if you do,  
I'll multiply every Turk's turban by two.

In a certain snug street that I know very well,—  
For I lived in Casgar once, a year at a spell,  
And dashed off one morning, myself, in a hurry,  
The "plan of the city" that's published in "Murray"—  
There lives, or did live, Anno Domini Fifty;  
A tailor called Mustapha, civil and thrifty;  
    So merry withal,  
    You never could call  
But you'd hear him strike up like the band at a ball!  
Such fun was his music that people would stop  
And form quite a crowd round the door of the shop;  
Till many a Turk, irresistibly pleased,  
Who stayed there to listen stepped in to be measured.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, No. ccxxxi,  
March, 1853.

One fine afternoon,  
 Towards the middle of June,  
 Our friend was as usual humming a tune  
 And singing some verses he'd made on the moon,  
 As cross-legged he cosily squatted at work,  
 In his double capacity, Tailor and Turk,  
     When a queer little figure  
     As black as a nigger  
 Peeped in at the door with a wink and a snigger;  
     On his backbone a hunch  
     Had grown such a bunch  
 That he looked very much like an African Punch,  
 And Mustapha's heart gave a leap to his throat  
 Lest this rum little devil had called for a coat.

    But he hadn't: he sat  
     Plump down on the mat,  
 And drummed a few chords on the crown of his hat,  
 Then struck up a ballad so brimful of fun  
 That Snip rolled about on his board like a tun,  
 Shouting, "Stop there, you grinning young son of a  
     gun!  
 Don't burst a man's biler, adone lad, adone!"  
 But stop?—not a bit! he rattled his wit  
 Till Mustapha's ribs were just ready to split,  
 It's a mercy he didn't go off in a fit!  
 John Parry, I'll swear, had he only been there,  
 Would have thumped out his musical brains in despair,  
 And each 'Brother Brough,' as in sympathy gruff,  
 The optic fraternal he wiped with his cuff,  
 Would have sobbed "Brother, brother—we've lived  
     long enough!"

The words I can't copy—because, in a ramble,  
 My pockets were picked by a bandit of Stambol,  
 Who prigged all my papers and pounded my head—  
 Walked off in my breeches, and left me for dead.  
 I only remember it closed with a wink,  
 And a pointed request for “a trifle to drink.”

“Drink? dear little black,  
 With a hump on your back,”  
 Cried Mustapha, “come along home for a snack!  
 The cut of your jib will tickle my ‘rib,’  
 We'll hang you out supper and liquor *ad lib.*  
 By Jove you deserve it. Come, jump off the floor,  
 And shove up the shutters whilst I lock the door:  
 Early closing for ever, and Mental Improvement!  
 I say, little dog, it's an excellent movement.”

Not far down the road  
 Lay the Tailor's abode,  
 His “cot” as he termed it when turning an ode,  
 Where the fondest of wives, with a kiss on her lips,  
 Stood ready to welcome the fondest of Snips.

With a start and a stare,  
 The Tailoress fair  
 Exclaimed, “Oh my goodness, who have you got  
 there?  
 A little black Blackamoor, well I declare!”  
 “Pray, wife,” said the Tailor, “some supper prepare:  
 Don't snub little Hunchback, but set him a chair;  
 If he doesn't surprise you when once his tongue's  
 loose,  
 By the bones of the Prophet, I'll swallow my goose.”

Alas and alack  
 For our dear little Black,  
 His manners were almost as queer as his back :  
 For he never said "thank you," and never said  
     "please,"  
 But ate with his knife, and began with his cheese,  
     And snored as he chewed,  
     Which is perfectly rude,  
 When in civilized company taking your food :  
 Till his host and his hostess exclaimed, "What a  
     glutton  
 This low little Hunchback is, over his mutton !"

At length a great crab  
 He snatched with a grab,  
 And down his black throttle attempted to dab ;  
     But frightful to say,  
     It 'went the wrong way,'  
 And there, its crustaceous ill-will to display,  
     Perversely stuck fast  
     " Oh, I'm diddled at last !"  
 Gasp'd Blacky. " Gulph—guggle. It . . cannot . .  
     get . . past.  
 Quick ! Slap my back somebody—Oh, try a spoon !  
 A long one—a longer ! Oh, I'm a gone 'coon !"

To paint the despair  
 Of our kind hearted pair,  
 When the poor little nigger rolled out of his chair,  
 I give you my honour is more than I dare :  
     For besides all the croaking  
     Folks make when they're choking,

And the trouble they give, which is vastly provoking  
 In the midst of a meal,  
 They couldn't but feel  
 They'd lost a fine crab which had cost a great  
 deal;

And that wasn't all, for I'm sorry to state,  
 They were doubly perplexed by their visitor's fate,  
 The laws in Casgar being cruelly queer,  
 (In fact one might almost pronounce them severe,  
 Compared with our mild little statute-book here)

Announcing outright,  
 In plain black and white,  
 'You must mind what you're at when your friends  
 you invite,  
 For, if any true Mussulman dies in your house,  
 You'll be hung the next day'—which seems rather a  
 chouse.

So it's clear that our couple had reasons a few  
 For bringing their crooked young visitor to.

They ran off directly for 'Hints on Emergencies,'  
 To see what the author, (an eminent surgeon) says;  
 They opened his jaw,  
 And fished in his maw

With hook-sticks and scissors, and stammered "oh  
 law!"

When they couldn't so much as catch hold of a claw.  
 "It's all of no use,"

Said the Tailor, "the deuce  
 Take the hunch and the boy! they'll be cooking my  
 goose,

I expect, with a stock that ain't easy to loose,



To-morrow at six;  
 It's rather a fix,  
 At my time of life to be in for the kicks!  
 Come, what's to be done wife, eh?—chop him up  
 little,  
 And sell him for sav'loys and poor people's victual?  
 Or, stay! Lug him off to our neighbour the  
 Saw-bones,  
 And swear that *he* killed him, in handling his  
 jaw-bones!  
 That's better! yes, bundle him up on my back:  
 I'll leave him next door and be home in a crack!"

'Ding ding' at the bell:  
 "This gemman ain't well,"  
 Says the Tailor, "his backbone's beginnin' to swell.  
 Tell your master, my lad: say he's wrigglin' with pain,  
 And sends up this guinea his case to explain:  
 And tell him he'd better come down pretty quick,  
 Or he'll find his poor patient as dead as a brick."

Our doctor—a Jew,  
 Had but little to do,  
 Because all his patients were luckily few;  
 So he sat in his room, looking hungry and blue,  
 Writing fancy prescriptions and fabulous letters,  
 And wishing himself better known to his betters.  
 And, of course, when his boy  
 Burst in, full of joy,  
 "Oh master—oh master—oh master, ahoy!  
 Here's a cove and a pound!  
 And, oh, isn't he round!

And the little chap squeaks as he sits on the ground !  
 And he can't come upstairs, 'cause he's bad I'll be  
 bound !”

    He jumped off his chair,  
     Six feet in the air,  
 And taking, alas, neither candle nor care,  
 Went hop skip and jump to the top of the stair—  
     Where, just in the way,  
     Poor Blackamore lay,  
 Very little expecting such nimble display—  
 Kicked him head over heels—oh it's painful to say  
     How he banged like a ball  
     On the stairs and the wall,  
 And how thump after thump you might hear in his  
 fall,  
 Till at last you might hear him roll into the hall.

    “O ! O ! Vat ish here?  
     I've killed him I fear !  
 Oh ! fetch down the candlesh ! O Moses, ma tear,  
 Pleash help us—I would not have kicked on his rear  
     If I'd known vere he lay.  
     O ! vot a bad day,  
 To walk on von's patient that comes with his pay !”  
 So shrieked the physician as down stairs he ran  
 In frantic pursuit of the poor little man :  
     He did all he could,  
     But he did no more good  
 Than if he'd been coaxing a doll made of wood ;  
     For every appliance  
     Of surgical science  
 He found that his customer held at defiance,

And still perseveringly lay on the floor,  
Precisely as ugly and dead as before.

And then, in despair,  
The Jew tore his hair,  
(Our Hebrews have commonly plenty to spare)  
And cried on the 'prophets' to 'make it all square!'  
But outcries and 'groans  
Which might soften the stones,'  
Are things which my muse altogether disowns,  
And begs you'll not fancy she's going to 'harrow,'  
Or 'freeze' you, or play any tricks with your 'marrow';  
But simply imagine a Jew giving tongue,  
Crying, "O vat a pity it is to be hung!"

It was well for this Jew that his little foot page,  
Though small, was extremely discreet for his age;  
He never with lollipop made himself ill,  
Nor cribbed from the counter, nor stole from the  
till,  
Nor whistled on Sunday, but sat by the cook,  
Improving her mind with some good little book:  
And he often would say—"See, I never get whacked,  
And I never say nothing that isn't a fact,  
And in minding my work, O I'm always exact,  
And perhaps, when I die, I'll be put in a Tract;  
That's 'cause I'm so good, cook: indeed I don't see  
As the 'Little Blind Dustman' was better than me."

"Oh master, oh master!" the prodigy said,  
"O don't go a-twistin' the hair off your head,  
If so be as the poor little gemman is dead!"

And please not to swear—'cause I'll quote you a  
text—”

“Texsh be blowed,” said the Jew, “you young devil,  
what next?

I've killed him, I tellsh you!—He's dead as de door,  
And if de polishmen shall find him, oh lor!

De Judgsh and John Ketch vill be only two stages—”

“Boo-hoo!” cried the youth, “shall I lose my week's  
wages?

Oh master, hooray!

I've thought of a way;

You need not be hung, for I'm sure it will pay—

And I'll tell you for sixpence! come, what do you  
say?

Old Cofi, the grocer,

Lives next door you know, sir,

Well! wouldn't it just be a regular poser

To slip him down chimney? We'll soon shove him  
through,

And Cofi's cock sure to get hung 'stead of you!

If you swear that he never came into your house,

Though I can't tell a lie—I'll be dumb as a mouse!”

“Oh Moses!” the Jew said, “dis queer leetle brute,

Dear boy, down the chimnesh we surely will shoot;

And, for fear in de vay he should shmut all his  
clothes,

Ve'd mush better keep dem ourshelves, I suppose.

I'll pull off his coat vich, ma tear, is quite new,

And a great deal too goot for to veare in a flue;

You pick off de breeshes and shoes from his fork,

He vont vant again to go out for a valk!”

So the poor little Black, being stripped on the spot,  
Down the chimney of Cofi, the grocer, was shot.

Now Cofi, the grocer, though upright as any,  
Except in the matter of turning a penny,  
Was given to practise, I'm sadly afraid,  
What are mildly described as 'the tricks of the trade.'

At least, people said,

With a shake of the head,

That he primed his 'prime congo' with sloes and  
black-lead:

And worse a great deal, that, unpleasantly often,  
With him 'ripe old coffee' meant 'rotten old coffin;'  
A dodge which they tell me, to this very day,  
Is practised in London—don't mention it pray—  
And that people quite like, if they'd only but speak  
up,

A dash of their grandmamma whisked in the teacup.  
His sugar, they added, was sandy and damp,  
And his oil only fit for a 'wonderful lamp;'  
In fact, all agreed, if he wasn't a scamp,  
The Grocer was certainly one of that stamp.  
Of course on such gossip I'd gladly be dumb,  
But it bears on my story—so out it must come.

For there lived in the city a well-meaning man,  
Who'd found out a plan  
Such rogues to trepan,  
And rolls from the oven and milk from the can  
Would buy on the sly,  
On purpose to try,

As he sat at his breakfast with nobody by,  
 And a thumping great microscope screwed in his eye,  
     If the bread was quite nice,  
     And hadn't a spice  
 Of something that wouldn't be cheap at the price,  
 And the milk just the thing that the real cow carries,  
 Unslushed with pump-water and plaster of Paris :  
 Until, when he'd quite made the tour of the table,  
 He'd slash off an article, caustic and able,  
     In a work of his own,  
     Where all would be shown,  
 And horrified spinsters would read it and groan,  
 "Oh why don't he let people's victuals alone?  
 Oh why did he tell us? No wonder one's thin!  
 Oh dear, what a state must our stomachs be in!"

Of course all the tradespeople termed him a spy;  
 And gloomily swore, "when they caught him by an'  
     by,  
 They'd leave the great microscope tight in his eye!  
 And he'd better look out 'cause as how they were  
     blessed  
 If his facts or his food he'd much longer digest;"  
 And, by way of a *soubriquet*, christened him 'Whack-  
     Lie,'  
 A name, all agreed, that described him exactly.

    After this you may guess  
     That Cofi no less  
 Went walking in bodily fear of 'the press,'  
 Than of some one who signs with a capital S,

He snatched up the body—ran out in the street—  
 (A. 50 was, luckily, grubbing cold meat  
 Adown the Jew's 'airey,' that lay on his beat,  
 And trying *his* hand at improving the cook,  
 Though not, I'm afraid, with a 'good little book')  
     Stuck him fast by the wall,  
     Ran back with a squall,  
 And jumped into bed, breeches, turban, and all;  
 Where, all the long night through, he lay on the  
     rack,  
 And squealed through the sheets like a pig in a sack.

That night, it so happened, the 'Friends of the  
     Vicious,'

A clique in Casgar then extremely officious,  
 Had held High Palaver in 'Brotherhood Hall,'  
 To prove that the heathen weren't vicious at all:  
 That all men were brothers, and all men should hug,  
 Or as they expressed it 'drink out of one mug;'

    Going on to proclaim

    That, if 'twas your aim

To make shaggy savages humble and tame,  
 'Twasn't powder and ball would accomplish that same.

    " You should first catch a Tartar,

    And coax him to barter,"

Said they, "and the moment he finds what you're  
     arter,

    He'll say with a grin,

    Extending his fin,

' My dear Preachee-Teachee, now don't take me in!  
 I'm backward at figures, you'll find, I'm afraid,  
 But I and my nation will joyfully trade.' "

"It merely," they said, "wanted skilful caressing  
 To make the poor Kaffir a positive blessing:  
 We should bear with his freaks:—if he did in the  
 night,  
 Drive your cattle and leave half your haystacks  
 alight,  
 Should you for that reason—yes, you—better taught,  
 Humanity's precepts hold likewise at naught?  
 No: joke with him, court him, implore he'll repent,  
 And Friendship, then Trade, will the bargain  
 cement;  
 You'll send him clocks, calico, tweezers, and rum,  
 In return for scalps, elephants, banjos and gum,  
 Won't *that* be a triumph—a glory withal,  
 To the nation that boasts of a Brotherhood Hall!"

'Twas thus, from the platform, with unction and zest,  
 Sneeki-Peeke, the Quaker, that conclave addressed.  
 'Twas thrilling, they tell me, to hear him, as  
 'cheers'—  
 Condensed in 'sensation'—subsided in 'tears';  
 And heavy old women and hazy old cits,  
 Were heard through the darkness, exploding in fits—  
 At length, having fairly disburdened his mind,  
 Proved that battles were sinful and blows were  
 unkind,  
 Sneeki-Peeke, the Quaker—first pouching his fee—  
 Went smiling benignantly home to his tea.

I wonder why Fate  
 Lies always in wait,



Such excellent people to catch in a strait,  
 And why I've this dismal mishap to relate?  
 In crossing the Grocer's respectable street,  
 Where little dead Hunchback stood stiff on his feet,

Just outside the shop,

The Quaker ran flop,

Against the poor body, which caused it to drop,  
 Tripping up Sneeki-Peekei, who gave a great hop,  
 Crying, "Thieves! here, policemen!—hoy, watch-  
 men—patrol!

I'm robbed—I'm assaulted! I am, 'pon my soul!

Come, somebody, come! I'm in fear of my life!

Come, some one, before he jumps up with a knife."

But then, when he found

His foe on the ground

Didn't look very large, and was crooked and round,

He bravely ran back

And hit him a whack,

Shouting "Shammin's no use, you detestable Black!

I'll teach you a peaceable man to attack!

Oh, you don't mean to rise! you're afraid of my  
 stick?

Very well, then you're all the more handy to kick!

Ha, here come the Watch! they shall hear what  
 you've done!"

Cried the Watch—"Hollo, Quaker, it's useless to  
 run!

No nonsense! we saw you—we watched the whole  
 tussle, man;

And saw you knock over and pound this 'ere Mus-  
 sulman,

If he's dead—and he is too! we wouldn't be you,  
When the first thing to-morrow, you're catching your  
due!"

Of course it was vain  
The facts to explain,  
Such flimsy evasions, where autocrats reign,  
Universally meeting with simple disdain:  
And poor Sneeki-Peekei, with great consternation,  
In five minutes found himself tight in the Station.

It seems in Casgar, where but slenderly thrives  
The noble Profession that somehow contrives  
To run rather to seed in our Westminster hives,  
The County-Court Judges try folks for their lives;  
And it's found that this practice, in dealing with  
crime,  
Effects both a saving of money and time.

They call on the cause,  
And nobody jaws  
About 'alibis,' 'proofs,' and absurd little 'flaws,'  
Which would argue a great disrespect for the laws.  
"Now then," roars the Judge, "where's the Quaker?  
who—that?  
That sheep-stealing, snuff-coloured hound in a hat?  
Knock it off, sirrah Tipstaff! now then—what's the  
charge?  
'Broke a Mussulman's head and the Statues at Large?'  
Of course he did! Look at him—guilty and dumb—  
Not an answer to make!—Tell the hangman to  
come!

Hold your tongue, sir, this moment! D'ye think I  
sit here  
To hear fellows chatter whose guilt is quite clear?"

"Jack Ketch, my Lord, waits."

"Oh, that's lucky; away!

Tie him up—tie him up, lying rascal! but stay,  
Set a chair for the Court, outside, under a tree,  
That the end of this villain myself I may see."

Loud roared Sneeki-Peeke, on finding his case  
Assume such a sudden and shocking bad face;  
(Any practical man could have told him 'twas vain  
His private antipathies thus to explain.)

The rope was made fast,

The moment was past,

Which florid reporters describe as one's 'last';  
When somebody shouted, "Stop, hangman!  
avast!

You've got the wrong cove;

Don't let him be hove!

He isn't the villain—I did it by Jove!  
I'm Cofi—the Grocer! I caught him last night  
Making mouths on my hob, and I smashed him out-  
right,  
And I can't go to sleep 'cause I'm jumping with fright,  
And I wish to be hanged, and oh! please tie me  
tight!"

"Lor' bless me," the Judge said, "if this be the case,  
You'd better step up in the gentleman's place.

I'll be bound, if the facts are at all as you say,  
That thief, Sneeki-Peekei, won't stand in your way!"

So, up went the Grocer:—his head's through the  
noose,

In a precious fair way to be cured of the blues;

When hark, there's a cry,

"Ma tear, it vash I,

And I cannot permit de pore Grosher to die!

Don't hang him, I ask, and I vish to tell vy!"

"Good heavens," the Judge said, "suppose it *were*  
you,

Why keep the Court waiting, you snivelling Jew?

Jump up and be hanged without further to-do!"

"But I vish to speak vords—may I? only a few?"

"No YOU MAYN'T!" roared the Judge, "for they  
wouldn't be true!

Pitch over the Grocer there, hangman, and stifle

This beggar who'd thus with our dignity trifle."

"Ay, ay, sir," the hangman said, "how many more?

Here's three to begin with—and here's number

four!

My stars, merry Mustapha! well, I *am* blessed!

If he isn't as great a tom-fool as the rest!"

"My lord," cried the Tailor, "one word in your ear!"

But, just as he spoke, people shouted, "Stand clear!

Make way there—make way for our Lord the

Vizier!"

Bang, bang, go the kettle-drums, twelve on a side,  
 That roll for his Greatness where'er he may ride;  
 Flap, flap, go the standards of Mussulman green,  
 That flutter wherever his Greatness is seen;  
 'Hooray,' go the people, who always hooray  
 At aught that's unwontedly noisy or gay;  
 And down goes the Court in a servile salaam,  
 As much as to say, 'Oh, how flatter'd I am!  
 I hope you don't mean to play Wolf to my Lamb!'

“ Rise, Judge, to your feet;

Your worship I greet

From one who esteems you both just and discreet.  
 The Lord of the Faithful, who sits all alone,  
 And rules the wide world upon Solomon's throne,  
 Commands your attendance; and bids me require  
 Both Tailor, and Doctor, and Grocer, and Liar:  
 It seeming that one of them's murdered his Laureate,  
 A dark and disloyal performance to glory at:—  
 He hears they all own it, and swears by the moon  
 He'll teach them to bully a Royal Buffoon!”

Now, just at this point,

My tale to disjoint,

I bid all at once lesser actors 'aroint!—

Now for a goose-quill, round and clean,—

Back flats and flies, and change the scene!

That morning at eight,

From his pillow of state

And couch of spun-gold, Caliph Haroun the Great  
 Woke, yawning extremely and scratching his pate.

“Go, some one,” said he, “for our funny Buffoon,  
 And bid him come hither and strike up a tune :  
 We’re seedy this morning,—yes, rather so-so ;  
 Our Hunchback alone can inspirit us.—Go !”

“Great Prince of the Earth, and the Air, and the  
 Wave,  
 Live long and for ever !” made answer the slave.  
 “His Royal Buffoonship, sir, yesterday night,  
 Alas, closed his eyes on your majesty’s light :  
 He went for a walk, and O, shocking to tell,  
 Strolled into some place where the tradespeople dwell ;  
 They caught him—they killed him, and, stranger  
 than all,  
 They’re cutting like fun to the County-Court Hall,  
 Each swearing, ‘I did it ! ’tis I that should squeak,’  
 Which looks like a dodge, Sir, to diddle the beak.”

Upstarted in wrath from his pillow of state  
 And couch of spun-gold Caliph Haroun the Great ;  
 For dearer than all  
 In the Caliphat hall  
 Was the blithe little Hunchback so funny and small ;  
 “Is it thus,” he exclaimed, “that these worms of the  
 dust  
 Dare—dare to insult Caliph Haroun the Just ?  
 Must he mourn the pet boy that delighted him so,  
 And the girls of his Harem their little black beau,  
 And mourn unrevenged ? no, by Mahomet, no !  
 Command our Vizier  
 To bring every one here,  
 Before our tribunal at once to appear ;

For, by Heaven, the ears of all ages shall ring  
 With the sentence they'll hear from the lips of their  
 King !”

’Tis done, as we know :  
 And, bowing quite low,  
 They front the stern judgment-seat all in a row,  
 Sneeki-Peeke included—the picture of woe,  
 With his eloquent mouth like a capital O.  
 “Curst wretches !” the Caliph said, “which of ye  
 four  
 Slew this poor little fellow that lies on the floor,  
 The pet of our Palace, the joy of our wives?  
 Beware how ye answer : ye plead for your lives.”

Then the Tailor spoke first, and the Jew, in his turn,  
 Gave the tale to the Grocer, and then, ‘wretched  
 kern,’  
 The Quaker, who sorely mistrusted such parley,  
 Contrived, with loud sobs, to blurt out the *finale*.

When all had been heard,  
 “It’s rather absurd,”  
 Said the Caliph. “We think the first, second, and  
 third  
 May pass without censure :—the crab and the kick  
 Were accidents purely, and, as for the stick,  
 Master Grocer, next time you must mind who you  
 lick.  
 But, as for the last,” he resumed with a smile,  
 “Sneeki-Peeke, your head must come out of its tile ;

For, of course, when we look on this poor little dumb  
 body,  
 We want consolation for this out of somebody!  
 Ho, headsman!"

The words were scarce uttered when, lo!  
 With a queer little kick and a queer little crow,  
 The queer little man  
 Sat up, and began  
 To sneeze and crack jokes and his visage to fan,  
 Saying, "Fetch me some beer, please, as soon as you  
 can!  
 I'm faint and I'm dry as the dust in the pan;  
 Do, there's a good Caliph! now don't look so cross!  
 I know that, last night, I took too much—fish sauce!"

To paint the good Caliph's excessive delight  
 Would fill a great volume, too bulky to write;  
 He let off the steam in a waltz round the garden,  
 And wound up the *pas* with a general pardon.

And then—to conclude—that their fortunate lot,  
 Like Gunpowder Treason, might ne'er be forgot,  
 And that all men, for ever and ever, might learn  
 How difficult sometimes is Truth to discern—  
 That all one can see of a case may be small,  
 And black may be white, if one did but know all,  
 He sent out and bought a great Pillar of Brass,  
 To stand by the gate where the magistrates pass;  
 And bade, on its face,  
 From the crown to the base,  
 A famous Historian write the whole case:



Which he did, with great skill,  
And it's legible still,  
And I own I shall take it prodigiously ill,  
If, treating a poet's assertion as *nil*,  
You whip your red 'Murray' down out of the  
shelf,  
And rudely demand if I've seen it myself?

# THE FLYING HORSE.

A TALE OF CASHMERE.<sup>1</sup>

“There's something in a flying horse!”—  
WORDSWORTH.—*Prologue to Peter Bell.*

## CANTO I.

There is a good old custom in the kingdom of  
Cashmere,  
With flying flags and beating drums, to welcome in  
the year;  
To set a gallant fair afoot, with spacious booths and  
gay,  
And keep the merry Nevrouz-time, which we call  
New Year's day.

Not there the Fantoccini show—the tumbler on the  
cord—  
The wax-work van—the Acrobats—the man that  
eats the sword—  
The beer within the drinking booth—the pork upon  
the pole,  
To glut the cockney appetite, and vulgarize the soul.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, No. ccxxxi,  
May, 1853.

From all the wealthy provinces, the steady craftsmen  
bring  
The best of all their workmanship to set before the  
king;  
That he may judge their diligence, as proved in every  
stall;  
Rebuke the bad, reward the good, and crown the  
best of all.

With all his court and councillors, the good old  
monarch went,  
The morning that my tale begins, through every  
booth and tent:  
He praised each well-made implement, with "Come,  
that's very nice!"  
And sometimes asked the use of it, and sometimes  
asked the price.

At length—for monarchs are but men—"Methinks  
a tidy spell,  
A long day's work, my lords," he said; "Ho, sound  
the dinner bell!  
A good pope's eye and cherry pie, will find more  
grace with me,  
Than all the 'raw material' there yet remains to see."

Then straightway from a scarlet booth, there jumped  
an Indian man,  
And boldly towards the weary prince, the noble  
savage ran.

“Lor, King,” he said, “me here all day from six  
o’clock till four,  
In hopes to show you something, dat you nebber  
seen before:

“Do come along—it won’t be long; for if you will  
not wait,  
To-morrow all de folks will say, de King him come  
too late;  
Him nebber see de famous horse dat in de Indian  
stall:  
Dis king no wise, him give no prize to what was  
best of all!”

“Dear me,” the good old monarch said, “since  
you’ve so much to show,  
And cannot wait, our spoon and plate awhile we  
must forego:  
Lead on my friend, and we’ll attend: we praise your  
workman zeal,  
And hold the cause of Industry far dearer than our  
meal.”

Three summersaults that Indian cut, and chuckling  
led the way;—  
His apish face had not a trace of aught save craft  
and clay;  
The fire that shines through lips and eyes, and speaks  
the man within,  
Had never yet been lighted in that swarthy child of  
sin.

" Ah, bless my soul," the good king said,  
 " A model I presume,  
 Of steeds beyond the Tigris bred?  
 Bedad, I'll send my groom.  
 'Tis very clever—nice indeed!  
 He looks almost alive;  
 Now, pray—a horse of such a breed  
 Do people ride or drive?  
 Aha! yes, thank you! bless my heart,  
 What a long way to send  
 So very large a work of art;  
 Good day my honest friend!"

" Stop, massa king," the Indian cried,  
 And flashed his coal-black eye;  
 " You tink my nag a straw-stuffed hide,  
 Like what de picanniny ride;  
 Dat neither kind nor sly.  
 Look here! I turn dis tiny peg,  
 And up he lift his fine fore-leg,  
 And swish dat silken tail!  
 I turn it more—he stamp and snort—  
 Ha! shall I ride him round the court,  
 And top a six-foot rail?  
 Not I, indeed, for what the need  
 To praise or puff so rare a steed?  
 I tell you he can fly!  
 Turn but dat peg completely round,  
 He'll dash like arrow from the ground,  
 And gallop in the sky!  
 You guide him straight with bridle-rein,

You prance on cloud, you cross the main,  
 You see the stars extremely plain,  
     Like pumpkins—only bigger.  
 You do much more—too fine to tell,  
 But dat's enough: me here to sell;—  
 If, as I tink, you like him well,  
     Perhaps you'll name your figure."

"My lords—my lords!" exclaimed the king,  
 "Who ever saw so strange a thing,  
     Or dreamt of such a horse?  
 Ha, ha! when turned the tiny peg  
 To see him lift his fine fore-leg!  
     Buy him? of course—of course!  
 I would not for the five great zones,  
 The wealth of all their thousand thrones,  
     This masterpiece of art,  
 Should ever fill a gilded shrine  
 In other halls than these of mine,  
     Or glad some rival's heart!  
 What says my Keeper of the cash—  
     The counter of my tizzies?—  
 How much to spend would not be rash  
     On such a horse as this is?"

Replied the bland Exchequer lord,  
     "O king, give what you will;  
 The doubt is what you *can't* afford,  
     Whilst I command the till!  
 Bid what you please, great master mine;  
     No faithful liege will grudge it;  
 Or, if the sulky slaves repine,  
     Leave me to cook the budget."

“There—there!” cried the king,

“How much must he bring?

You’ve only to speak, for the guineas to ring!”

“Go—offer your cash to the bird on the wing!”

Sneered the horse-dealing savage: “dat lark in de sky,

Would gold fetch him down to be baked in a pie?

‘O tanky!’ he say, and O tanky, say I.

Now, hearkee to me,

Dis horse dat you see

Was made by three fellers much wiser than we:

Nine years they sat a-thinking,

With hand upon the chin,

Across the work-bench winking,

Before they did begin.

Nine years they spent a-talking

Of what their thoughts had been,

In turn their plans a-chalking

Upon the workshop screen.

Nine years they toiled a-building,

And then they came to die;

Two graves, alas! were filled in

Before the Horse would fly.

But when the last lay sickly,

He kindly sent for me;

Says they, ‘my lad, come quickly,

He’s almost up the tree!’

“I went: I found him dying;

But he said, ‘The work is done.

The Horse that goes a-flying

I leave to you, my son.

The secret's in a parchment scroll,  
 Concealed within my breeches ;  
 One promise please :—upon your soul,  
 You won't for filthy riches  
 Resign the prize : demand no less  
 Of those who'll swarm to buy,  
 Than a respectable Princess,  
 Good bye, my lad—good bye !'  
 Now what you say ? your daughter's nice ;—  
 I'm not so nasty :—that's the price !”

You may guess that an offer so friendly and frank  
 Made the Court and the King look remarkably blank.  
 Just fancy yourself, my dear madam—do pray,  
 If your own model maid should composedly say,  
 “Please, mem, might I wear your best bonnet and  
 shawl,  
 To go with my ‘cousin’ to-night to Vauxhall ?”  
 If you think that your answer'd be pithy and short,  
 You may guess what the King said, and what said  
 the Court.

Still it seemed so absurd,  
 He thought, at a word,  
 To lose the fine Horse that could fly like a bird,  
 That he didn't give way  
 To his temper and say  
 Such horrid strong things as papas, in the play,  
 Would seem to consider gives point to their “nay.”  
 He argued, “This lout  
 Knows what he's about ;  
 There are more ways than one though to tickle a trout !



A wretch who can scarce know the clink of a ducat  
 Will jump at the offer of gold by the bucket ;  
 While, as for my daughter—an impudent whim !  
 We'll try how diplomacy answers with him.  
 Your Horse, my good friend—a mere toy though it be,  
 I wish to possess. In selecting your fee,  
 I must say you'd better have left it to me.  
 To sneer at hard cash, man, is humbug so rank  
 That I doubt if you ever went over the Bank ;  
 To ask for my daughter is still more insane :—  
 Why, every one knows she's peculiarly plain ;  
     She squints with one eye,  
     And one shoulder's too high,  
 And she hops in her walk ;—she's a positive Guy !  
 And her hair's run to seed like a crop of dry teazles,  
 And 'twas only last night she broke out in the measles.  
 Of course, if you wish me, I'm ready to bid her  
 Accept you at once: don't be rash, but consider !”

Then forth from the ring  
 That surrounded the King,  
 The Prince Heir-Apparent advanced with a spring.  
 “Good gracious,” he shouted, “to speak so of sister !  
 I'm sure it's a wonder your tongue doesn't blister !  
 This blubber-lipp'd rascal, this woolly-pate cur,<sup>1</sup>  
 To dare to come here and talk nonsense of her ;

<sup>1</sup> I cannot help suspecting that the villain of our story was, in reality, an African ;—the authors of the Arabian Nights being quite as independent as Shakspeare in their geographical notions. His character is so thoroughly that of the conventional 'nigger' of fairy romance, and Africa so likely a place to pick up an Enchanted Horse, that I have had no hesitation in assigning him the usual characteristics of what I believe to

And you, at your age too, to gape at his Horse,  
 As if the whole thing wasn't humbug of course;  
 If you must be convinced it's a thundering do,  
 Here!—I'm in the saddle, and round goes the screw!"

For my part—who never, I'm sorry to sing,  
 Could pull without finching my shower-bath string—  
 I candidly own that his Highness's freak  
 Appears, to my thinking, both wilful and weak;  
 And, being by nature much wiser than witty,  
 Regard such a simpleton simply with pity.

With a great crash of clock-work and jingle of wheels,  
 The savage steed instantly kicked up his heels,  
 Gave a stamp and a bound and a plunge and a neigh,  
 Sprang snorting from earth and flew soaring away!  
     Straight, straight through the air  
     He rattled full tear,  
 Galloping, galloping goodness knows where!

have been his real breed. I shall probably be reminded that the conduct of the Horse, in taking the first opportunity of making a bolt for Bengal, is very strong evidence that he was at least acquainted with the road. But since, most assuredly, the Indian was no mild, effeminate Bengalee, I do not lay much stress upon this particular fact.

I cannot help remarking that, in my own opinion, the original story would have been better had the author not insisted upon the fact that the Horse itself was enchanted. Surely there was here no 'dignus vindice nodus.' Magic is well enough in its way; but, like a great many other good things, is occasionally out of place. We take much more interest in the curious quadruped if we look upon him as the triumphant result of a long life of artistic labour, than if all ingenuity be dispensed with, and all difficulties cut short, by degrading him to the level of Mother Shipton's flyaway broomstick.

'Till the Prince, whom they followed with horrified  
stare,  
Far dwindled in distance and ether quite thin,  
Looked less than a walnut—a whitebait—a pin!  
And in five minutes more, so exceedingly small,  
There really was nothing to look at at all!

“Yah! seize me the traitor—the fiend! he shall swing!  
Odd’s bomb-shells and catapults!” thundered the king.  
“You gallows-faced heathen! how durst you draw  
nigh,  
Thief—ape that you are! with a horse that could fly?  
Do you see what he’s done?  
Flown away with my son!  
That’s all! O by Jove, but you’ll pay for your fun!  
Where is he? I ask you—you damnable black!  
Is he lost? Is it likely the Horse will come back?”

“Sare, why speak to me? How you ’spect me to know  
Where dis foolish young gentleman likely to go?  
Me run up to stop him;—him tell me ‘get out!’  
Me ’spostulate; debbil! him hit me a clout.  
Me no time to show him de odder peg, sare,  
Dat make de fine Horse come down out of de air. }  
If he no find it out, him continue to fly  
Till him knock a great hole in de roof of de sky!  
Me s’pose dat him get in de debbil’s own row—”

“Cease, Traitor!” the King said: “I solemnly vow  
That if, safe and sound,  
My boy isn’t found,  
Before the great sun has completed his round,

In twenty-four hours told off by the clock,  
 Our headsman shall hand you at once to the block.  
 Meanwhile — hollo, blacksmith! steel bracelets for  
 one! —

Beware, when to-morrow I ask for my son!"

'Twere needless to tell what a frightful to do  
 Upset the whole palace; how dreadfully blue  
 The 'Sticks' and the 'Grooms' and the Chamberlains  
 grew;

(As any good Stick would, of course, at the bare  
 hint

That the Heir to the throne was no longer Ap-  
 parent.)

How the king feeling anxious and wakeful — no  
 wonder!

Lay lapping rum 'nightcaps' and roaring like thunder;  
 While, chained in the cellar, that Indian perfidious,  
 With yells made the night inconceivably hideous.

All this, which decidedly out of our line is,  
 We briefly pass over to follow his Highness.

Away, away, through the pathless blue,  
 Higher than ever the condor flew;  
 Over the desolate mountain-height,  
 Over the glacier jagged and white;  
 Over the deep dusk plains beneath,  
 Crossed by many a wandering wreath,  
 Without one sound or mark of man  
 Throughout their shadowy rounded span;  
 Stretching away like a swarthy lea,  
 To the luminous line of the distant sea.

The very first words Prince Firouz spoke  
 Were, "Dash my wig, but it's past a joke !  
 A curse I say on my folly to back  
 This clattering, flyaway, clock-work hack !  
 I can't pull him in for he's all made of tin,  
 And, to judge by the way the wheels jingle and  
     spin,  
 He may fly for a week, and the pestilent pin  
 That started wont stop him; oh, murder, I see  
 In more ways than one that it's all up with me !"

    If ever you've seen  
     The 'veteran Green'  
 Ascend with his boat-load of cocknies, or been  
 Yourself on a trip to the regions serene,  
 Please fancy the funk of his petrified crew,  
 If he suddenly said, looking ruefully blue,  
 " We've seen the last of London Town,  
 For the valve's gone wrong and we can't come down :  
     And the thinner you grow,  
     The higher we go ;  
 So where we shall stop I'm not likely to know !—"   
 So shall you figure the blank despair  
 Of poor Prince Firouz up in the air.

Now, in cases like these—you may sneer if you  
     please—  
 It's fifty times worse when you've no bread and  
     cheese—  
     And hence, as he flew  
     Through the fast-falling dew,  
 Each supperless moment more frantic he grew ;

And tugged at the bridle, and strained at the screw,  
 And piously said all the prayers that he knew—  
     Till down sunk the sun :  
     I'm certain, for one,  
 He'd have pitched himself over as sure as a gun,  
 If, just at that moment, he hadn't espied  
 A second small handle, deep sunk in the hide.  
 "Thank Heaven, at last there's a chance to be tried !  
 I can't be worse off—that's a comfort !" he cried ;  
 "Even if—as most likely—'tis part of the trick,  
 And you screw up *this* peg when you want him to  
     kick."

    No ! Down at the touch  
     Went the steed very much  
 Like a crow on a fallow slow-sinking, and such  
 Was the giddy sensation as wheeling and wheeling  
 He went, that the Prince lost all thinking and  
     feeling,  
 And found all his brain-work as quickly congealing  
 As if playing pendulum, legs to the ceiling.

    Starting at last, as out of a dream,  
     He woke to find the clear moon shining  
     Full on his face :—" Well, don't it seem,"  
     He said, "as if I *had* been dining ?  
 But no—I'm as sober as sober may be ;  
 And I don't see a hedge and I don't see a tree—  
 A roof as I live ! I *am* pleasantly planted !  
 Adventures for ever—no doubt I'm enchanted !  
 What's yonder ? a Horse by all the fates,  
 Insanely trying to graze off the slates !

Bah ! fool that I am—I remember it all !  
 He's back upon earth to look out for a stall.  
 The stupid brute can't have the sense of a louse  
 To turn a chap loose on the top of a house !  
 I won't sleep outside ! how the housemaids will  
     roar  
 When they hear rat-tat-tat on their jolly trap-door !”

After infinite groping  
 Round roof-top and coping,  
 He reached a dark nook, where a ladder went sloping,  
 By way of a species of airy back-stair,  
 One couldn't for certain prognosticate where.

An endless terrace carved and laid  
 With snow-bright marble: not a sound,  
 Nor sign—save where the moonlight played  
 Along what seemed enchanted ground,  
 And on the three great windows bright,  
 Flung open to the sultry night.

From slowly-burning lamps within,  
 Creeps on the air a golden gloss,  
 The giddy bats fly blindly in,  
 Through floating trailers looped across:  
 And out again, on soundless wing,  
 They dive and flit the platform round;  
 But hark ! whose jingling footsteps ring?  
 Who dares to tread enchanted ground?

“Aha !” cried the Prince,  
 “This is charming, but since

I'm rather too hungry the matter to mince,  
 I'll just beg a peep through those curtains of  
 chintz;

The windows would hardly be open so wide,  
 I should think, if one wasn't expected inside.

Ha! beauty, by jingo!"—

So still she sate

Amid the grand armorial panes

Flung backward from her chair of state,

You might have deemed that from her veins

All force had ebbed, as if to rise

Resistless in those noble eyes.

Half leaning on the faultless arm,

That shone through glossy waves of hair,

She sat, the spirit of the calm,

The Queen of Moonlight, gazing there:

Gazing on the grand procession,

Brightly marching east and west;

Star and planet's thick succession,

Toiling orbs that scorn at rest!

Hair-brained was the Prince and reckless,

But his face due qualms expressed,

When he saw the diamond necklace,

Throbbing on her startled breast;

And when she, with calm impatience,

Queen-like eyes upon him fixed,

Then, indeed, his young sensations

Grew at once extremely 'mixed;'

Not that she looked annoyed or furious,

But much surprised and proudly curious.



“I’m the Prince of Cashmere.”

“I’m the Child<sup>1</sup> of Bengal!”

“I’m intruding, I fear.”—

“Oh, dear, not at all!

But our ditches are deep and our walls are high,  
And our warders are fierce and let nobody by,  
And you didn’t, I fancy, drop down from the sky?”

“I fancy I did,”

Said the Prince; “but pray bid  
Your cook to peep under his pudding-pot lid!  
I swear I’m so hungry I’d feed off a horse,  
Without making faces or asking for sauce!—”

“Dear me — dear me!” said the sweet princess,  
“How shocking! some supper he quickly shall dress;  
Your fork you shall stick in  
The wing of a chicken,  
And revel in salad that lobster shall thicken;  
Champagne shan’t be wanting to fill up a chink,  
Nor punch that would make a dried crocodile wink.  
So few are our visitors here in Bengal,  
I’m only too pleased you came this way to call.”

Delightful days! I’ve often thought,—  
When starch formalities were none;  
When beauty, turning up unsought,  
Blessed the glad finder idly won.

<sup>1</sup> Pro ‘Infantâ,’ scilicet Princess,—prosodiæ gratiâ.

When folks had little else to do  
     But smoke their pipes in gardens breezy ;  
 'Till mild adventures came to woo,  
     And crisp the stream of 'Life made easy !'  
 Ah, well-a-day ! so, times there were  
     When ways were none to mend ;  
 When oaks were tall that now are all  
     Transform'd to good Wall's-end—  
 When wriggling out of old-world eggs,  
     Came huge land-lubber whales,  
 With fourscore eyes and fifty legs  
     And several dozen tails.  
 When sprawled fat spiders, yards across,  
     And each primæval lizard  
 Could grind a tough rhinoceros  
     Alive within his gizzard.  
 'Till Time came by with sand and scythe,  
     To banish the colossal ;  
 And pitched their naked bones to writhe  
     In gaunt museum-fossil.  
 Long may they rest in idle truce,  
     Quartz-coffin'd and age-smitten,  
 Who'd wish to see a mammoth loose,  
     His best friends tossed and bitten ?  
 But must all eras change alike,—  
     The same coarse hand crush all ?  
 The steel that should the elm-tree strike,  
     On bleeding violets fall ?  
 And could not even Time forbear  
     To spoil those charming days,  
 Whose very sunset in the air  
     Still gilds Arabia's lays ?

Now, honest old wall !  
 I prithee tell all  
 That met the sweet ears of the Child of Bengal ;  
 How spoke the gay Prince at the blithe *tête-à-*  
*tête,*  
 That grew so imprudently lengthy and late ?

“ Ah, royal Child ! ”—(I give the pith,)  
 “ Since life within me rallied,  
 (Another tumbler, hot, please, with :—  
 This is indeed a salad !)  
 Your beauty’s done its work on me,  
 And heaven be my witness,  
 Without your smiles the world would be,  
 (Oh, what a plate of kidnies !)  
 I say the world were one wide blank,  
 A hopeless hateful prison ;  
 (Such stunning punch I never drank !)  
 My angel, won’t you listen ? ”

Then, shifting down from love to gold,  
 His father’s wealth he sounded ;  
 His fame in fifty books enrolled,  
 His realm almost unbounded.  
 He talked of chested millions,  
 Of pearl tiaras ten,  
 Of crimson war-pavilions,  
 And endless lanes of men.  
 Of the vast palace-parapets  
 That blazed a furlong high ;  
 The fish-pools and the fountain-jets  
 That sprinkled half the sky !

Well pleased the lady listened  
 To the sounding of such fame,  
 And her dark eyes brightly glistened  
 When the wild proposal came :  
 But the Horse upon the house-top  
 Made her start a little too ;  
 " For goodness' sake, sir, now stop !"  
 She said ; " that can't be true !  
 What ! gallop here from far Cashmere  
 Along the yielding sky,  
 And reach Bengal ere night could fall !"

" You really wish to try ?"  
 The Prince cried : " Step upon the roof,  
 Fair Child, and you shall see ;  
 And find in this the clearest proof  
 That you may trust in me.  
 You'll come ? Brave girl, I knew it !  
 Yon vault is not so dark  
 But he'll bear you safely through it,  
 Till you hear the dog-star bark.  
 I now no longer fear him ;  
 I can curb his clock-work flight,  
 And I know the way to steer him,  
 So mind you hold me tight !"

\* \* \* \* \*

Aslant Cashmere the morning breaks, and grows to  
 sultry day ;  
 Now, from the brazen arch of noon, the cruel sun-  
 beams play ;

Now, striking from the purple west, they float in  
painted lines ;

Now, round and rayless ere he sinks, the feeble  
monarch shines.

All day the king had stumped about, and asked of  
every one,

“ Pray can you tell me anything of my departed son ? ”  
Of course his worst misgivings would nobody avow,  
So all they did for answer was to shake their heads  
and bow.

Then mad with wrath and fear he grew, and ill with  
rage of mind ;

“ Bring forth,” he said, “ this Indiaman ; this cunning  
knave unbind ;

Set out the block and basket, that his head may grin  
to-night

Upon the steepest pinnacle that crowns our palace  
height ! ”

Out came the solemn headsman, with his heavy  
shouldered axe ;

Out came the wretched Indian, whining, “ Bless me !  
what a tax

To pay for bringing here a horse which, it must be  
allowed,

Caps all the world for workmanship ! ” “ Speak up,  
sir ! ” bawled the crowd.

The headsman swings his hatchet

Three times aloft in air :—

To see the nigger catch it,

The people press and stare.

“Hold, hold the death-stroke—hearken!  
 The Prince—the Prince! hooray!”  
 A thousand flung caps darken  
 At once the face of day.  
 “Hooray, our fine young master,  
 He’s here all safe and sound!  
 There isn’t no disaster!”  
 Roar all the folks around.

“Hug, hug me, Royal Father!  
 A lady on the crupper!  
 She loves me too, sir—rather!  
 And, oh! sir, such a supper!  
 Such kidnies! oh! such lovely eyes,  
 And such a little waist!  
 She’s here—no there, sir, in disguise,  
 For fear she should be chased!”

“Dear me, dear me,” the monarch said, “I don’t  
 quite comprehend:  
 Pray where were you the livelong night?—and who’s  
 your female friend?  
 I don’t quite see the story’s point, or why she should  
 be chased,  
 You skip so quick from kidnies to the lady’s little  
 waist!”

Again the frank young Prince began and told the  
 story through,  
 Commencing where, aloft in air, the mad sky charger  
 flew.

He prosed about the charming Child a little, to be sure,  
 And sketched, with pardonable pride, his brilliant  
*coup d’amour.*

"I chose not that the million  
 Should say," continued he,  
 " 'He came a riding pillion,  
 With a wife upon his knee ;'  
 And therefore I alighted  
 At our country palace gate,  
 'Till, royally invited,  
 I bring her home in state.  
 Pursuit ! a likely notion !  
 I'm not myself, sir, yet ;  
 That nag's confounded motion  
 Might steadier brains upset."

"Ah, that reminds me," cried the king. "Why,  
 bless my heart and soul,  
 They're nicking off the rascal's head to clap upon a  
 pole ;  
 He needn't die — of course not — if you're certain  
 you're alive —  
 Quick ! check his fate, and through the gate that  
 hateful heathen drive !

And, for a hint, six kicks imprint with care upon his  
 stern,  
 That lightly of the lame-foot maid<sup>1</sup> the tingle he may  
 learn.  
 Now, lovelorn son, this mercy done, we'll view your  
 lady's charms ;  
 Ho ! turn a torch-light escort out, and drummers  
 beat to arms !"

<sup>1</sup> 'Pede Pœna claudo.'

Danced on the drum the larum loud, the clear-throat  
bugles blew,  
Its ravel bright of roaring light each bursting bonfire  
threw ;  
Forth strode the milk-white elephants in huge throne-  
laden pairs,  
And, shuddering at their footfall weight, far shook  
the city squares.

Then down the crowded rampart-line a cheer like  
thunder ran,  
As through the massive gateway-arch poured the  
long-lighted van ;  
As rose amid the roar of drums the stormy sere-  
nade,  
And streaming down the causeway went the endless  
cavalcade.

The fleece-drawn mist hangs bloodshot o'er the torch-  
men's winding line ;  
Like shock-hair'd goblins of the dew the palm-trees  
blink and shine ;  
'Till breeze-borne floats the wedding-march, blown  
back in filmy strains,  
From a dusk-red hazy glimmer moving o'er the  
moonless plains.

They tapped the Indian on the back,  
" Begone, you thief ! " said they ;  
" You just make track, and don't come back,  
Or else alive you'll flay !



So swears his Royal Highness,  
 And his word he's like to keep;  
 So don't abuse his kindness  
 Now he's let you off so cheap."  
 Uprose the kneeling victim  
 With a scowl of serpent-hate,  
 And, as if the fiend had kicked him,  
 Ran yelping through the gate.  
 You cannot think how cunning  
 Was that varlet's foxy soul,  
 Nor, if you'd seen him running,  
 Had you ever guessed his goal.  
 With horrid croaks of malice,  
 And thoughts too vile to tell,  
 He reached the country palace,  
 And briskly rang the bell.

"De master of de Horse am I,"  
 Said he, "de king's a-coming;  
 Look where dat heap o' torches fly,  
 And harkee to de drumming!  
 To seat upon de saddle  
 His lady bright and true,  
 Young massa bid me rattle  
 Like a swish-tail kangaroo.  
 For, says he, 'the crowd's quite fur'us  
 To see my Princess fair,  
 And I guess they'll count it cur'us  
 If I fetch her home by air!  
 But what's the good o' talkin'  
 'Till we catch it 'cross the hide?  
 Will you please to let me walk in,  
 'Till I set the gal astride?"

Alas, too trusting beauty !  
Your Prince is at the gate ;  
But the nigger saves his booty  
And the bridegroom comes too late.  
Alas, too sanguine lover,  
Dismounting at the doors !  
As a pheasant whirrs from cover,  
Away the Indian soars !  
Aloft a blazing flambeau  
He waves in triumph wild ;  
While, in the clutch of Sambo,  
Screams the poor affrighted Child !

“Hoy, Massa Prince—good bye, sare !  
Dis nigger up to snuff !  
You catch me ? O you try, sare !  
Dat just one leetle tough.  
Me nebber had de measles,  
So your sister count for small ;  
I’s e one of dem born weasels  
You don’t trap every fall !  
Dis fine gal suit me better,  
All royal top to toe :—  
Wal—in hopes to get a letter  
’Fore long, up sky we go !”

## CANTO II.

Of all the sad swains that sigh under the sun,  
Conceive yourself, reader, the fortunate *one*,  
That's just stepping out of a carriage and pair  
At the porch of St. George's in Hanover Square;  
    With, under your wing,  
    A 'gushing young thing,'  
And snug in your waistcoat the guinea gold ring.  
    And further, suppose  
    That just as you rose,  
At the clinching 'amen,' from your knees to your  
    toes,  
And the gushing young creature was blowing its  
    nose,  
The pompous old beadle, with business-like stride,  
Pushed Mamma and Papa cavalierly aside,  
And seized the small waist of your horrified bride;  
    And, without more ado,  
    Complacently flew  
Through the air to the pulpit and wished you adieu!  
Flitted up to the gallery—perched on the rail,  
Nodding and winking and wagging his tail;  
Then dashed out of window full tilt from the organ;  
Why, law!—talk of men struck to stone by the  
    Gorgon!  
You'd probably feel, left alone in your glory,  
About as much 'sold' as the Prince of my story.

Through curls of smoke  
 The morning broke  
 On every looming mountain-crown ;  
 But fiery fast,  
 Above them passed  
 The steed that sped from Cashmere town,  
 The horrible negro laughed with glee,  
 As under them tossed and flew  
 The rough white foam of the China sea ;  
 And he shouted a wild halloo  
 To the crew of a junk  
 That were howling with funk,  
 As it wallowed a mastless wreck ;  
 And burning pastilles,  
 In piteous appeals  
 To a corpulent Idol on deck.  
 'Twas noon by the sun,  
 Ere, gloomy and dun,  
 The forests of strange Japan  
 Rose out of the sea ;  
 " Now, harkee to me,  
 Young gal !" the nigger began :—  
 " Dat howlin's quite horrid, and 'taint no good !  
 Don't holler, they say, till you're out of the wood ;  
 Wal now—of all woods dat I ever come near  
 Down yonder's the last where you'd make people  
 hear,  
 'Cause nobody lived there—never !  
 Dere's nothin' but monkies and green cockatoos,  
 You can 'splain it all clear to 'em, 'course, if you  
 choose,  
 But it don't seem worth yer endeavour.

It's plum in the middle I mean to pitch,  
 How happy my pet will be,  
 In her neat little wig-wam of hickory-switch,  
 A-sitting on Sambo's knee:  
     With nothin' to do  
     De honey-moon through,  
 But fondle him nicely, and tell him how true  
 She loves him all down from de crown to de shoe!  
 Dere's cocoa-nut milk for her drink so sweet,  
 Dere's heaps of nuts for missy to eat;  
     De little buzz-bee  
     Live top of de tree,  
 Me scramble to fetch her down honey for tea:—  
     Here:—dis a good place  
     To light from our race;  
 Now missy—give Sambo a kiss on de face.”

Indignant from the horse's back  
 The proud young Princess sprang,  
 And smote the nigger such a crack  
 That his ebony jawbones rang.  
     “Wretch! stand aside!”  
     She sternly cried;  
     “Black poodle-headed thief!  
 I, such a devil's nut-fed bride!  
 Not if as many threats he tried  
 As corn-seeds in the sheaf!  
 Stand off! beware the tiger-taught—  
 The daughter of Bengal!”

“Come! none of dem 'ere tricks of court,  
 Dey don't suit here at all,”

The ruffian said—"dere's time enough ;  
 Me just go rind a stick :—  
 If missy still cut up so rough,  
 High time dis gal to lick !  
 Ha ! wat dat sound ? dat nebber come  
 From any bird I know !  
 'Pears like a screamer cotched in gum ;  
 Ha ! cuss, what bugles blow ?"

He'd hardly spoke when horse and hound  
 Came crashing through the wood,  
 With yelp and bound and bugle sound,  
 Towards where the lady stood.  
 The foremost on a raven steed,  
 A square-set peppery man,  
 Was yet, as well the Child could read,  
 The Lord of all Japan.  
 For I have heard and count for true,  
 That royal eyes can tell  
 Their equals all disguises through,  
 Such grace in kings doth dwell.

The monarch reined his raven steed,  
 And raised his hunting cap ;  
 " Can aid so sweet a Princess need ?  
 Or what auspicious hap  
 Brings one so lovely to Japan,  
 Where strangers touch so seldom ?  
 And who—why gallows take the man !  
 Is that unwashed he-beldam ?"

She could not speak—she only sprung  
 And clasped him round the knee;  
 Her frightened eyes and cheeks all hung  
 With tears were sad to see.

“Wat’s dis?” the filthy negro cried;  
 “How dare you sare! dis gal’s my bride!  
     Go ’long you ole varmin,  
     Trot back to your farmin’  
 ’Cause, look you, I’m goin’ to whip her a sarmin;  
     She want’s it most precious,  
     She’s regular vicious:  
 I reckon I’ll break her in raal judicious:—  
 I allers do just what I please with my wife.”

“Oh, you do!” said the King—“so do I with my knife,  
 So look out a-head!”

    With a crack and a squash  
 To grass went the ravisher yelping “O gosh!”  
 He kicked up his heels and he turned up his eyes,  
 And in short, as they say in the Tragedy, [*dies.*]

Alas, now I think of it,—Horace declares  
 Bad people should always be killed below-stairs:  
 And that ever, for fear the discerning should criticise,  
 Rank blood you should carefully curtain from Pity’s  
     eyes.

He’s right, I confess. I was wanting in tact.  
 Henceforward, all skulls shall be privately cracked.

Need I formally state, at so gory a sight,  
 How mademoiselle fainted off-hand in a fright;

How they tickled her, splashed her, and ripped up  
 her stays,  
 And tried, but in vain, her sweet eyelids to raise,  
 'Till finding her dumb as a German polony,  
 They trotted her home on a little black pony?

The horse in the meantime stood sober and coy,  
 Like the Gift of Minerva when wheeled into Troy;  
 What the deuce could its use be and how it came there  
 Quite baffled conjecture. At last, in despair,  
 They settled to carry it home in a cart,  
 As a nice little nut for anatomy's art;  
 "Fum Owen," said they, "will jump out of his skin,  
 To see such a promising mammal brought in;  
 He's the man for our money—so handy and quick!  
 He cries all day long for more subjects to stick.  
 Gad! in five minutes' time from the knife at your  
 throttle  
 Your skeleton's picked and your tripes in a bottle!"

\* \* \* \*

A broad and royal chamber,  
 The dawn-light slanting in,  
 Through panes of Orient amber,  
 As if one smile to win;  
 One waking smile from her who lies—  
 Deep sleep upon those curtained eyes!

Around her fragrant pillow,  
 A bower of plumes and gold  
 Droops like a glittering willow;  
 And still in slumber's fold,



She stirs not, though the sunbeams, now,  
Have trembling kissed her queenly brow.

Hark! trumpets in the palace court,  
Their clear and gay *réveillée* flinging;  
And bang! the cannon from the fort  
Set all the pictured windows ringing,  
And roar to all the tower bells  
To loose their clamorous tongues to-day:—  
She wakes at last, as hoarsely swells,  
Down street and square, one grand “hooray!”

Around her couch a maiden train,  
On bended knees present their duty,  
Yet lavish all their airs in vain  
Upon the dark-eyed southern beauty.  
She gazes round in strange surprise;  
“Where am I? was it all a dream?  
The Prince, the Indian?” “Bless your eyes,  
He loves you as a cat loves cream!  
He does indeed ma’am,” chirp they all;  
“You’ll meet him in the Peacock Hall!”

“Meet whom?” she asks, “whose halls are these?  
What boisterous mirth is yonder, pray?  
What guns and bells?” “Oh, dear, ma’am, please  
Remember ’tis your wedding day!  
They say his highness did not sleep  
One mortal wink the livelong night;  
And twice upon the floor did leap,  
Each time exclaiming, ‘Hold me tight!’

Don't let me dart her dreams to break !  
 Ah ! what a husband, ma'am, he'll make !"

What bondage is rhyme! Why just here I'd lay down  
 A large sum of money—to wit half a crown,  
 To be loose for five minutes and tell you in prose  
 What grief in the Child's pretty bosom arose;  
 What thoughts of the Prince! O, it's cruelly hard  
 To shamle along like a handicapped bard,  
 While three-volume tinkers plod recklessly by:—  
 No Abbey for them though—no, no! when they die!

A sad fix was hers, because Kings of the East  
 Don't stand upon trifles—in courtship at least;  
 And boldly condense all the usual twaddle  
 To "will you, or won't you? a nod or a noddle!"  
 She felt that to stave off her destiny sad,  
 But one way was open—at once to sham mad.

Now, in England, there's nothing more easy on  
 earth;  
 You needn't indulge in ridiculous mirth;  
 Tilburina's white satin, Ophelia's sad song,  
 Mrs. Bloomer's pink breeches, are all far too strong.  
 You've simply some innocent victim to smother—  
 A child three weeks old is as good as another—  
 Or, coaxing your sweet-heart to walk in the garden,  
 Tuck a knife in his brisket, and then beg his pardon,  
 And lo, the deed's done! all the jury in chorus  
 Will snort, "How inhuman to bring her before us!  
 Bah! stop the defence! 'Twas a lunatic's act,  
 Our verdict, at once is, 'Not Guilty' 'cause cracked."

The Princess, however, who lacked opportunity,  
Or, perhaps, didn't care to cut throats with impunity,  
Went mad in her own way ; she slapped her maids'  
faces,

Began to munch ribbon, kid gloves, and stay-laces,  
Cried out for an omlette of toadstools and rum,  
And finished by quietly sucking her thumb.

Dumbfounded, her horrified handmaidens ran  
For the chief palace-doctor—a learned young man.  
He came—put the usual questions, 'for luck,'  
She gave him no answer, but quacked like a duck :  
*That* settled the business: "Alas, it's too plain!"  
He muttered—"Her ladyship's clearly insane ;  
My questions are all so provokingly parried,  
I doubt but she's even too mad to be married!"

Bright burned the King's anger on learning the  
state

Of one he'd been pleased to select as a mate.  
Gloomily growling he stalked to and fro,  
With his hands in his pockets as far as they'd go,  
Then sent for the doctor—"I wish you to know,"  
Said he, "if the lady's not well in a week,  
Your neck it's our royal intention to tweak :  
It's just kill or cure man, and perfectly fair ;  
I like to be candid, so Bolus beware!"

Poor Bolus went out with a terrified squint,  
Right sorely dismayed at this practical hint ;  
He bled her, he cupped her—blue bottles and red  
Prescribed without ceasing, and blistered her head ;

In short, all the orthodox changes were rung,  
 'Till the end of the week, and then Bolus was hung.

The cry was, 'more doctors!' More doctors there  
 came,  
 But signally failed the young lady to tame;  
 And daily some leech, as the patient grew worse,  
 Who called in his carriage, drove home in a hearse.

Enraged at such failures, his Majesty, then  
 Demolished the Hall of those medical men.  
 To jail went to College;—their ears were all clipped,  
 They were privately blistered, and publicly whipped:  
 Each day, at the hands of the hangman, they quaffed  
 A fine, frothy goblet of double black-draught;—  
 "The discipline's rough, but the fault is your own,"  
 Said the king, "I must raise your professional  
 tone."

As a final resource, he bade Heralds proclaim,  
 Through all the wide land, in his Majesty's name,  
 "Volunteers to the front! Any bold amateur,  
 Who fancies he's able the Princess to cure,  
 May drop in and do it. In case of success,  
 Her weight in pure gold will but faintly express  
 Our sense of his merit. In case he should mull it,  
 We shall weigh him himself—with a rope round his  
 gullet."

\* \* \* \*

"But how about the luckless Prince?"

I hear some reader say;

"Pray what has *he* been doing since  
 The Indian soared away?"

Perhaps he sought an early grave,  
 From youth's bright hopes debarred;  
 Or did he simply stamp and rave?  
 Out with it, master Bard!"

I'll tell you. On first  
 Comprehending the worst,  
 The yells he sent after that Indian accurst  
 Were something quite awful;  
 Indeed such a jaw-full  
 Of terms that in Bow Street are voted unlawful,  
 And cheap at five shillings, you'd really have thought  
 He couldn't in youth have been properly taught.  
 On cooling, however, he clearly perceived,  
 'Twasn't thus that the maiden could well be retrieved;  
 And wisely remarked, "If the Child I can't follow,  
 At least she shan't think that my love is all hollow;  
 But follow I will!"

In those days, you should know,  
 Mere gentlefolks didn't a travelling go:  
 No cockney had ever yet ventured a stroll  
 On the banks of the Rhine, or beheld the Tyrol;  
 Mr. Smith, of Mont Blanc, had he lived at the time,  
 Would have scaled Shooter's Hill when in want of a  
 climb,  
 Or, may be, indulged in a heart-broken moan  
 For Albion's white cliffs on the beach at Boulogne;  
 At present our troubles are sorely increased,  
 When each travelled monkey tells tales of the East.

In short, it was everywhere quite understood,

A tourist, as such, could be after no good ;  
 I'll simply allude to the scrapes of Lord Bateman,  
 For which, *vide, passim*, the life of that great man.  
 A pilgrim passed freely, and so did a pedlar,  
 But every one else was a 'spy' or a 'meddler.'

Our hero accordingly purchased a 'pack'—  
 Brushed his hat the wrong way, turned his shirt-  
     collars back,  
 Put a pipe in his mouth and his gloves in his pocket—  
 And went to a general dealer's to stock it.  
 No curious reader will ask me, I hope,  
 For a formal detail of pomatum and soap,  
 Rouge, tweezers, tin thimbles, pills, hair-dyes, and  
     snuff,  
 Because, if he does, he'll get more than enough ;  
 Suffice it to say—that convenient old phrase !  
 The Prince drove away in a bagman-like chaise ;  
 And caring but little where Fortune might lead,  
 Like honest Don Quixote, left that to his steed.

    Towards the end of the day,  
     He reached a great bay,  
 Where lay a stout Indiaman bound for Cathay ;—  
     The Captain was bawling,  
     The sailors were hauling,  
 Or flourishing, shoreward, their hats of tarpaulin ;—  
 " May be," cried the Prince, " these fine fellows will  
     fall in  
 With her whom I seek ! I'll at once volunteer ;  
 'Twill be fifty times better than snivelling here !"

He did. Says the mate, "You young shaver,  
avast!

You must mind how you haul or you'll fetch down  
the mast!

You sleek whipper-snapper, why what good are you?  
No matter, go for'ard! we're short of our crew.

If you don't pull your pound, lad, you'll dance at the  
gangway,"

He added, and swore a good deal in a slang way,  
With divers allusions to 'timbers' and 'eyes,'  
That shore-keeping readers would rather surprise,  
And made—though they wouldn't be pretty to  
read—

The Prince go below, very nervous indeed.

Some weeks had gone by since that fine afternoon,  
When down on their course came a frightful typhoon.  
It roared through the rigging and thrashed them  
about,—

The mate had his eyelids blown clean inside out,  
The bulwarks were stove and the water washed in,  
'Till the men at the pumps were all up to the chin;  
In short, to save life—they could hope for no  
more—

They put the helm up, and so ran her ashore.

The Prince, who instinctively snatched up his pack,  
When he found all the timbers beginning to crack,  
(At such dreadful times, as you've probably read,  
The queerest of fancies come into one's head.)  
Reached land on a grating; but scarcely had set  
His foot on hard ground, before, sneezing and wet,

He was pounced upon, pummelled, and gagged like  
a felon,

With outrages perfectly painful to dwell on;—

“ Now, listen, young man,

Your foot's in Japan !”

They shouted, “ Ah ! get it away if you can !

Come, try it at once, for you've no time to  
spare;

It's not so much longer that noddle you'll wear !”

They led the wretched youth away

Before a pig-tailed ‘ beak ;’

“ Now, stranger, hast thou aught to say ?

If so, you'd better speak !

Our laws are death to those who land

Within these isles of ours ;

It seems they caught you on the strand—

A Pedlar by the powers !

Unstrap his pack from off his back,

And what the wares may be

That brought him thus to trade with us,

We'll very quickly see !

Ha ! snuff and tobacco :—a smuggler, I'll swear !

Rouge, thimbles, pins, tweezers—hem ! dyes for the  
hair !

And hollo ! see, ‘ Holloway's Ointment and Pills,

Guaranteed an Infallible Cure for All Ills !’

O, ho ! that explains it ! I now see it all !

He's after that blessed young Child of Bengal !

Did you come, my young friend, to effect her  
recovery ?”



“ I did ! ” screamed the Prince. “ I ’ m her slave, I ’ m  
 her lover, I  
 Came to recover her ! Oh, is she here ? ”  
 “ Not so fast ; ” growled the Magistrate, looking  
 severe :—

“ If that be your object, the King ’ s Proclamation  
 Commands us to pass you without molestation ;  
 But hark ye ! they tell me the lucky man ’ s fee  
 The weight in pure gold of that lady will be ;  
 One-half, my gay pill-box, is ample for *you* ;  
 The rest must reward me for letting you through :  
 Should you ever return, with your head on its  
 socket,  
 Remember, I ’ ve that little claim on your pocket ! ”

Albeit the Prince was puzzled sore,  
 He wisely answered, “ Done ;  
 When next we meet on yonder shore,  
 We halve the gold I ’ ve won :  
 Meanwhile, I ’ d thank your Lordship  
 To make my bearings clear,  
 For, as we say aboard ship,  
 I don ’ t see how to steer.”

\* \* \* \* \*  
 The palace gates are gained at last,  
 The drawbridge cleared—the sentries passed :  
 “ From foreign lands across the sea,  
 I come to work a cure,” said he ;  
 “ Where is the lady ? show me in,  
 And let the charm at once begin.”

Outspake the palace-porter,  
A very friendly man,  
"To come across the water  
Was but a simple plan,  
Because you might have died at home,  
Nor ever braved the roaring foam.

"Yon skulls that peel and blister  
In the sweltering noon-day sun  
Could not one bit assist her,  
But came off one by one:  
Aye, all you doctors fare alike,  
There won't be soon one empty spike.

"Between the homœopathist,  
Who grins there on the right,  
And yon poor damp hydropathist,  
Who only died last night,  
Your head will hang to-morrow morning;—  
Ah—well! if you will take no warning,—  
Go in and welcome: that's the door,  
And there's the lady, on the floor!"

"Fly, Doctor!" cried the Princess—"fly!  
I can't be cured: it's vain to try!  
Hence, pounder, with your pills and pack!  
I'm mad—I know it! quack, quack, quack!  
Don't stay, I charge you on your life!  
I'll never be the monster's wife!  
What, linger still? \* \* \* Good gracious, yes!  
I know him in his pedlar's dress!

My darling Prince! I am so glad!  
 My dearest, I'm not really mad!"

Quite needless were it to persist  
 In tearing from such scenes the veil;  
 The 'happy couple' hugged and kissed,  
 No doubt—but that's beside my tale:  
 'I do not rhyme to that dull elf,'  
 Who never did such things himself.  
 As quick as pigeons on the wing,  
 Her maidens ran to find the King;  
 "Oh, Sire!" they clamoured, "please come  
 quick;  
 A Pedlar's been and done the trick!  
 At once they both a-kissing fell,  
 And, as it seems, he's kissed her well!"  
 In rushed the King—"Your hand, my friend!  
 The means which led to such an end  
 We will not question! There's your cheque;—  
 Remember that we've spared your neck;  
 Our banker's gone abroad, but, dash it!  
 It's odd if somebody won't cash it;  
 'Till then, you see you've less to carry:—  
 And now, my Queen, at once we'll marry!"

Confounded stood the lovers;  
 But the royal Pedlar said,  
 "Until she quite recovers  
 It were not safe to wed:—  
 There's magic been at work on her,  
 That hasn't run its course;  
 'Twas drawn, unless I greatly err,  
 From an Enchanted Horse!

I only wish I had it here,  
 I'd soon set matters right;  
 And then your Highness needn't fear  
 To marry her to-night."

"To be sure!" cried the King;  
 "Now you mention the thing,  
 We picked up a nag that they hither shall bring;  
 And then cut your conjuring short, by the bye,  
 I hate being treated like Christopher Sly!"

The Horse, as I mentioned I think, had been placed  
 In the Royal Museum, whose keepers' good taste  
 Made them lock all 'hobgoblin-like' things out of  
 sight:  
 In a snug shady 'basement,'<sup>1</sup> that suited them quite;  
 And hence his good looks were a trifle gone by,  
 Being mouldy, and *minus* a tail and an eye.

"Place him out," said the Prince, "in the open court  
 yard,  
 Bring incense—bring ambergris, camphor, and nard!  
 Light censers all round him;—stand back if you  
 please;  
 The lady must mount him and sit at her ease:  
 More incense, more incense! continue to smoke us,  
 Whilst I disenchant her! now then,—Hokus pokus!  
 And presto, away!"

To the saddle he sprang,  
 The fizzing horse-clock-work went round with a clang,

<sup>1</sup> See Quarterly Review. Art. 'British Museum' vol. clxxv,  
 p. 153.

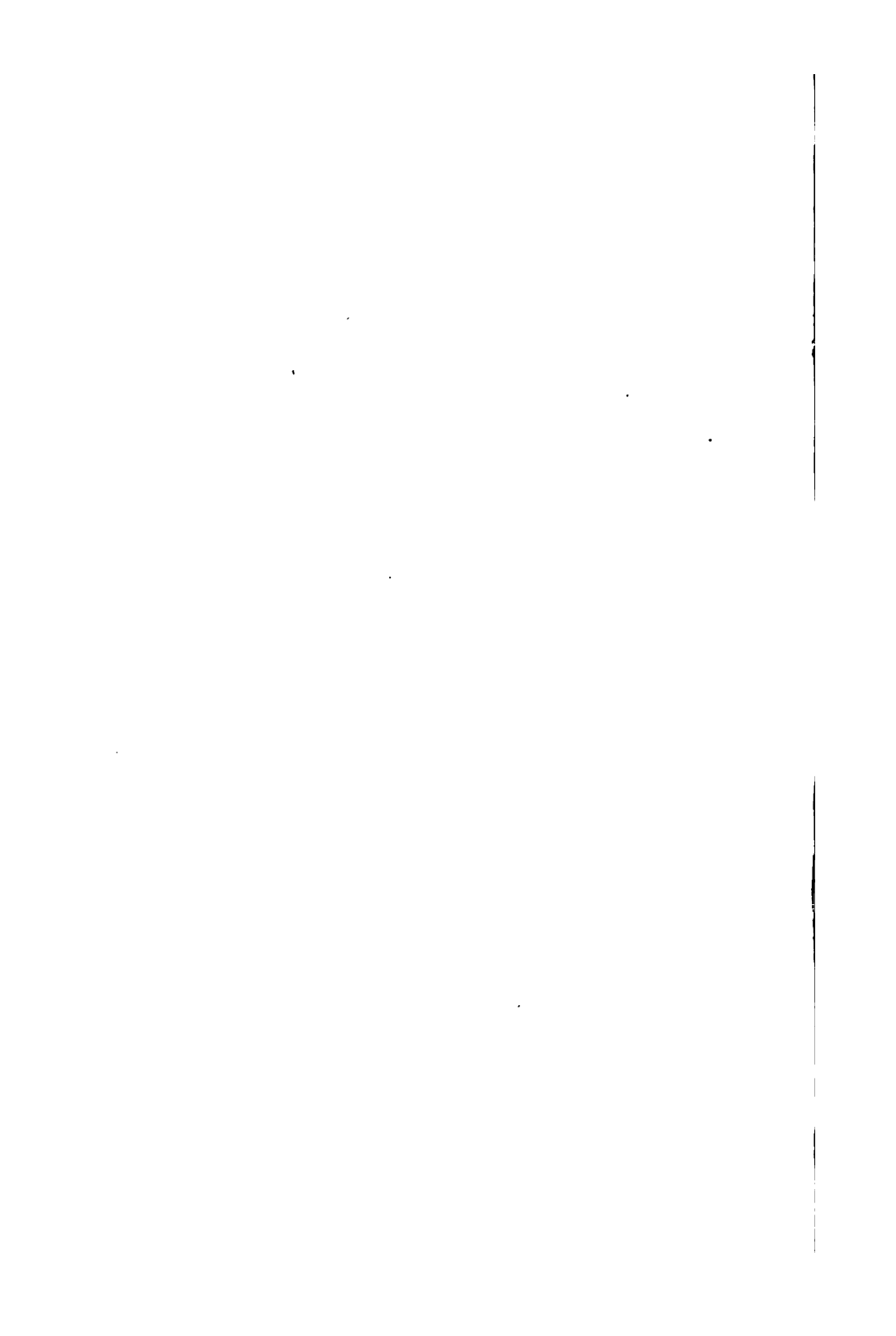
“Huzza for check-mate! My fine fellow, you’re  
done!

So, next time your thoughts upon marrying run,  
Be wise and don’t act like an owlish old Cadi,  
But previously ask the consent of the lady!”

All right-minded people will hear with delight  
That the lovers arrived at Cashmere before night;  
The wedding went off with the greatest *éclat*,  
The Prince on the throne soon replaced his papa,  
The Great Mogul dying, his daughter came in  
For the throne of the Indies—the crown and the tin,  
And, all over Asia, their splendour and fame  
Were everyone’s theme, till John Company came!

**PART III.**

**MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.**



# ERMENGARDE.

A LEGEND OF THE RHINE.<sup>1</sup>

[*Translated from an ancient Manuscript, lately discovered in the University library at Bonn.*]

“Verily,” answered Don Quixote, “you have told one of the rarest tales, fables, or histories imaginable; and your way of telling and concluding it is such as never was, nor will be, seen in one’s whole life!”—DON QUIXOTE, b. 3, c. v.

The thunders of the Great Crusade  
Resound along the Rhine;  
With angry light of lance and blade  
Her hundred castles shine.  
The war-bells, hot with swinging,  
Clash in each fretted spire;  
On the dusk mountain springing,  
Red leaps the nightly fire!  
The gallant vassals muster,  
To their feudal standards true;  
With a slight amount of bluster  
As to what they mean to do:  
For the slipping of a dirk  
Though the middle of a Turk,

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine*, No. ccx., vol. viii., June, 1851.



The Pope and all his Cardinals had voted a 'good  
 work,'  
 That all the ten commandments entitled one to shirk,  
 For goodness knows how many years—I shouldn't  
 like to state 'em ;  
 Which, on the Rhine, was held, it seems, no small  
*desideratum* ;  
 And, if you slew a couple, as they proved by calcula-  
 tion,  
 The killing of the last would count in supererogation !  
 So gladly rushed the clansmen from the ploughshare  
 and the vine,  
 To follow their stern chieftains through the sands of  
 Palestine!

Beneath old Rheineck's bristling gate  
 The fiery gallants throng,  
 And curse the fate that bids them wait,  
 For their chieftain tarries long.  
 The spearsmen are growing excessively drunk,  
 And bawling their battle-cry, " Who's in a funk ?"  
 The horsemen are belted and eager to mount ;  
 Where is their master, the shaggy old Count ?

The Count, all clad in clanking mail,  
 Still strides his warrior hall ;  
 His brows are knit and his lips are pale,  
 Though nobody yet knew him ever to fail  
 At the trumpet's brazen call.  
 But he is as jealous as jealous can be,  
 For the bride of his bosom is fair to see,

And it frets him sore  
To be off to the war  
And leave her unguarded a twelvemonth or more,  
And he's racking his brains for a feasible plan  
For guarding her well from a fancy-man!  
Meanwhile the sweet young Ermengarde  
Sat in her chamber crying,  
She heard the trampling in the yard—  
She saw the standards flying—  
She thought of moonlight battle-plains,  
Where wounded men lay screaming,  
With long pink slits in all their veins,  
Warm blood-pools round them steaming!  
And "Oh," cried she, "this poor old soul,  
To me so very kind,  
That on to his steed can scarcely roll  
When two men hoist behind,  
How shall he stand the charging line?  
How mad of him to go!  
To find a grave in Palestine,  
And leave me weeds and woe!  
I had no choice in choosing him—  
They say he's fifty-three;  
But still the thought of losing him  
Is very sad to me;  
Though I might have married better,  
So I've heard my mother say,  
But my father was his debtor,  
And with me he chose to pay!  
But, hark! he comes—once more to claim  
My prayers, and say that he's always the same!  
I know 'tis he, for nobody swears  
Like the dear old Count in getting up stairs!"

The Count strode in,  
 With a tender grin,  
 To grunt his last adieu;  
 And, foolish old man!  
 Full of a plan  
 For keeping a pretty wife true!  
 He hummed and hawed, and stroked his chin,  
 For he didn't see well at which end to begin;  
 Then said, "Ermengarde,  
 It's bitterly hard  
 That I should ride off to be pummelled and scarred,  
 Where much may occur my return to retard,  
 Such as getting tucked up in a strange churchyard,  
 With my pockets picked and my brain-pan starved;  
 And I leave you my dear  
 In horrible fear  
 Of strange young gentlemen visiting here;  
 Recollect, you're not out of your teens by a year.  
 I know, Ermengarde, you're extremely discreet;  
 But before I set off, I must beg and intreat  
 You'll never so much as *look* into the street;  
 That you'll live like a mouse  
 At the top of the house,  
 And simply exert all your feminine *nous*  
 On the maids and the darning—and always, at  
 night,  
 Send some one to ask if the gates are all right,  
 And they're perfectly sure the portcullis is tight,  
 And the drawbridge is up, and the lanterns alight!  
 And, one thing more, pray wear this ring;  
 I know 'tis an old-fashioned, rum-looking thing,  
 But, let me tell you, that ring was made  
 Of a crucifix worn in the first Crusade;

And pray observe,  
 If ever you swerve  
 From your duty to me in the tiniest curve,  
 That wonderful ring  
 Will at once take wing,  
 To me, as its master, a message to bring!  
 What a comfort for you—to be sure that I know  
 You're perfectly faithful, wherever I go!"

"You may tell me 'tis hard,"  
 Said the sweet Ermengarde,  
 "That you should ride off to be pummelled and  
 scarred;

I can tell you, I feel  
 It is worse, a great deal,  
 To be doubted in this way! and then to appeal  
 To a sixpenny hoop, that's as big as a wheel!  
 I didn't expect it! I couldn't have guessed  
 That doubts of *my* virtue would trouble your breast!  
 I wonder you dare, sir! to dream of such stuff,  
 Or tell me that ONE ring isn't enough!  
 No matter, I'll wear it! I'm dreadfully vexed;  
 But the ring you shall have when I welcome you  
 next.  
 Go, sir, go! and, if need there be,  
 Lock up your castle and carry the key!"

So the Count rode off to Palestine,  
 Loud laughing in his sleeve:  
 "Oh, long in this brass ring of mine  
 May Ermengarde believe!"

Next morning down the trembling Rhine  
 The fresh south-wind was blowing,  
 As, all beneath the sweet sunshine,  
 Young Ermengarde sat sewing.  
 And, "Oh," she said, "this hateful ring!—  
 I can't get on at all;  
 Each needle *will* that finger sting—  
 That finger far too small!  
 I needn't wear it surely,  
 To plague me all day long;  
 Locked in too, so securely,  
 How could a girl go wrong?  
 Oh, dear, that I into the river might fling  
 This horrible, old-fashioned, sixpenny ring!  
 'Tis too bad, I declare,  
 To ask me to wear  
 Such a trumpery bauble! Why couldn't he spare  
 A pretty gold locket, with some of his hair?  
 And I can't, and I won't; so the wretch may lie there,  
 And fly and tell tales of poor me, if he dare!"  
 So the ring was shaken with right good will,  
 And laid in disgrace on the window-sill.

Now I never yet read, whether story or song,  
 One single romance of the Rhine,  
 But the Devil was sure to come out pretty strong  
 In his own particular line:  
 Now sacking a convent, now bagging a soul,  
 Now swindling a bishop of mitre and stole,  
 And always contriving to render his rôle  
 So excessively pleasant, and lively and droll,  
 People really were pleased when he came to take toll!

So it's easy to see,  
 None other than he  
 Could have filled the Count's brain with his fiddle-  
 de-dee

About poor Ermengarde, who's as good as can be ;  
 And nobody else would have ventured to string  
 Such a cock-and-bull tale on a sixpenny ring ;  
 And nobody else would have dreamt of a trick  
 Like that in these presents recorded, but Nick.  
 For, just as the nice little finger was free,  
 And the needle was going as brisk as a bee,  
 A horrid black raven came down with a swoop,  
 And was off to the woods with the luckless hoop!

A raven—a fright !

Its eyes were alight

With a horrid red glow, and its tail wasn't tight,  
 And its beak was all wrong, and its feathers weren't  
 right,

And it croaked, as it flew, with a fiendish delight ;

And really, unless

'Twere the fiend in undress,

Who the brute could have been I'm unable to guess ;  
 Though I've puzzled, and hunted, and asked every-  
 where,

And called in Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury  
 Square,

To see if they kept such an article there :

And says they, " We don't know ;

Our catalogues go

No further than ' B. '—Ornithology's ' O. '

But Mr. Panizzi

Upon them is busy ;

So drop in again : 'tis a crown to a tizzy  
 That, long before this time nineteen-fifty-three,  
 Completed our catalogue fairly will be !”  
 So a century hence I mean duly to call,  
 And decide if the brute was a raven at all.

Imagine poor Ermengarde's horrid surprise—  
 How she screamed, how she opened her beautiful eyes,  
 On perceiving the ring was *en route* for the skies !  
     But scream high or scream low,  
     All's one to a crow ;  
 And away the bird whirred, like a bolt from a bow,  
 Leaving poor Ermengarde quite upset by the blow.

“ Oh, dear—oh, dear !” she sadly sobbed,  
 “ Was ever wife so vexed ?  
 First I'm suspected, then I'm robbed :  
     I wonder what comes next !  
 How *shall* I make the Count believe  
     About this horrid bird ?  
 He'll say, ‘ My dear, you can't deceive  
     Men of my age : absurd !  
 Such nursery myths are out of date :  
     When age experience brings,  
 We find that cats don't speculate,  
     And ravens don't steal rings.  
 Pray what has become of it ? Why did it go ?  
 And what I'm to answer I'm sure I don't know !  
 I'm certain to hear it all day long ;  
 And it's doubly unpleasant, when nothing's gone  
     wrong,  
 To be scolded as if you'd been coming it strong !

Oh, the least little slip, were it never so small,  
Were fifty times better than nothing at all!"

\* \* \* \*

The Baron von Stein  
Came of a line

As long as you'll easily find on the Rhine:—  
(Strong words by the way,  
For I know, to this day,

A Mainzer whose castle, I've twice heard him say,  
Was 'three times in mortgage ere Adam grew gray';  
And gravely explain that 'in birthright and blood,  
Mere *parvenu* families date from the flood;')—

Such a smart cavalier  
Never handled a spear,

Nor tossed off a schoppin of mighty Bock-bier;  
And his auburn moustache went right over his ear;  
So it's needless to add, what you've probably guessed,  
That he owned the best part of each feminine breast,  
Like the 'young Lochinvar that came out of the west!'

The Baron von Stein in his balcony sate,  
Smoking his porcelain pipe:  
Nothing particular filled his pate,  
For mischief ever too ripe!

In capital cue  
For the gentleman who

Likes to find idle folks plenty to do,  
And sets them to work with ineffable *goût*,  
Just as bad little boys are employed by a Jew!

As a point of 'costume,'  
You'll agree, I presume,

The pipe is a fact I may fairly assume;



Though I well recollect that some ignorant block-  
head

Makes Raleigh bring home the first 'clay' in his  
pocket,

And much flabbergaster the courtiers all,  
By leisurely blowing his cloud at Whitehall;  
Till James cried, "Wal'r it gars me speak,  
But the Deil's ainsel could-na bide this reek;  
Ye'll find your head croppit, mon, just in a week!"

The fact and the date

I leave to their fate;

And boldly assert that I'd rather relate  
The lyingest myth of a sea-snake and merman,  
Than hoax all my friends with a pipeless young  
German!

Well, there he sat smòking,

When, suddenly croaking,

A raven dropped from out of the sky,

And perched on the rail,

Wagging his tail,

And winking away with a blood-shot eye.

A raven—a fright!

Its eyes were alight

With a horrid red glow, and its tail wasn't tight,  
And its beak was all wrong, and its feathers weren't  
right,

And its manners were horribly strange and polite;

For, hop! it stood on the Baron's shoe,

And dropped a strange old ring,

As much as to say, "There's a trifle for you;

Don't ask any questions, they're useless.

Adieu!"

Then flapped its rusty wing ;  
 And ere Baron von Stein  
 Got further than "Mein——!"  
 That shocking black raven was over the Rhine !  
 Our bold Engineers,  
 In the field, it appears,  
 As a rule, run away with their thumbs in their  
 ears  
 When the powder's all right,  
 And the slow-match alight,  
 Some hideous infernal-machine to ignite ;  
 And, safe in the rear, growing valorous quite,  
 See the sky full of Frenchmen with martial delight !  
 Just so, to my thinking, it's perfectly plain  
 That, raven or devil, he's lighted *his* train ;  
 And, finding his plot need no further assistance,  
 Sneaked off to enjoy the good fun from a distance.

But it's time to return to our poor Ermengarde,  
 Whom we left, you know, shocked and hysterical ;  
 Very justly complaining, 'twas cruelly hard  
 To be ruined off-hand by a miracle.  
 In vain did her maidens to calm her essay,  
 And assure her that they  
 Were ready to say,  
 And swear and declare upon oath any day,  
 That the ring—not the lady—had wandered astray ;  
 That the Count was to blame ;  
 And a sin and a shame  
 It was to try on such a treacherous game ;  
 And he wasn't a man ; and they hoped for that same

He'd get knocked on the head, which would settle  
*his* claim,

And leave his poor lady in peace and fair fame!  
 On topics like these they descanted until  
 They found they were wasting their balm and their  
 skill,

And perceived that a further investment of breath  
 Would be simply to frighten their mistress to death;  
 When just as we've seen, in some gay pantomime,  
 Some 'Genius of Discord,' or 'Monster of Crime,'  
 Descend in red flame, with a fifty-man roar,  
 Amid thunder and smoke, through a smutty trap-door,  
 As a nice little fairy all spangle and wings,  
 Floats in, on almost imperceptible strings,  
 To request that the clouds will at once disappear,  
 Because Beauty's triumphant, and Virtue is clear—  
 So Ermengarde started at hope's bright gleam,  
 And her little heart leapt like a trout in a stream,  
 As in rushed a blooming soubrette with a scream,  
 "O ma'am! dear ma'am! what a fortunate thing!  
 Here's a strapping young gentleman's found the ring!  
 And I says, ma'am, says I 'Now you mustn't come in,'  
 But he winks and chucks me under the chin.  
 O ma'am! dear ma'am! how ever he dares!—  
 Here's the strapping young gentleman coming up  
 stairs!"

"Dear lady, I feel that your pardon is mine,"  
 Said the bland, irresistible Baron von Stein;  
 "To be able to bring  
 Good news of your ring  
 Is—in short, it's a dem'd satisfactory thing!"

And I'm certain you'll pay  
 In a liberal way,  
 The trifle I ask for my trouble to-day:  
 Three kisses—but three!—from those exquisite  
 lips,  
 And safe on your finger the article slips.  
 I know you'll be startled. You'll say, 'What! no  
 more?  
 Dear Baron, take six!—take a dozen—a score!  
 I never felt really grateful before!  
 And fairly admit it's excessively handsome  
 To claim, after all, such a nominal ransom!"

"Three kisses! Not one, sir!" said brave Ermen-  
 garde;  
 "Good gracious!  
 Audacious!  
 Begone, sir!—for shame!  
 And think yourself lucky to go as you came!  
 If you *do* keep the ring, sir, remember you've stolen  
 it;  
 And my husband shan't rest till your skin's got a hole  
 in it!"

\* \* \* \*

With angry cheek and sparkling eye,  
 The proud young Ermengarde  
 Watched the wild Baron thunder by,  
 Across the castle-yard,  
 And spur his charger savagely  
 Among the drawbridge guard.

The warders fled, in snarling dread,  
 From his horse-hoof's fiery clatter ;  
 But they stopped his groom, and punched his  
 head

To find out what was the matter.

“ Three kisses, indeed! (that's a beautiful mare!)

He's rather mistaken in me!

(The wretch rides uncommonly well, I declare,)

And may wait a long while for his fee!

Three kisses, indeed! (what a lovely moustache!)

The trumpery ring he may keep ;

(I needn't, perhaps, have been quite so harsh;)

It won't much trouble my sleep!

For this twelvemonth to come he's quite welcome to  
 wear it;

'Till then, goodness knows, I can easily spare  
 it!”

So Ermengarde cried,

In matronly pride,

And the ring, and the Count, and the Baron  
 defied,

And declared it was equally wrong and absurd

To be worried to death by the freak of a bird,

And that nothing on earth should induce her to  
 care

For a ring that she felt it quite shameful to wear!

Alas! that night,

Long before light,

She started and woke in a deuce of a fright,

For her dreams had been

Of a dreadful scene,

Where a raw-headed Count, with a mangled mien,

All gashed and mashed,  
 With his throat cut wide,  
 Stood hammering at the gate;  
 And swore he'd be dashed  
 If his haunted bride  
 Should 'scape the nets of Fate!  
 And moaned that it wasn't at all the thing  
 To keep dead men knocking for want of a ring!  
 So the course of her thoughts, as it's easy to see,  
 Ran easily on from the ring to the fee.

“Had he asked me for one,”  
 The ladye begun,  
 “It isn't unlikely I might have said ‘done!’  
 One kiss, we all know, may be given in fun,  
 And leave the fair donor as chaste as a nun!  
 Had he asked me for *two*,  
 I might have said ‘Pooh!’  
 Do you know what you ask, sir? That never will do!’  
 But then, even then—why, the beautiful hue  
 Of that curly moustache might have carried one  
 through  
 Without even fainting—unless people knew  
 Some pleasanter method of bringing one to,  
 Than that horrid cold water which wets one all  
 through.

But **THREE!**  
 Dear me,  
 It's a frightful fee!  
 Oh, no! it's absurd to expect I'll agree.  
 And yet, by the way, had he asked me for ten,  
 What would three have looked, by comparison, then?”

So an innocent, pink little three-cornered note  
 Went off at break of day ;  
 Its particular terms I'd be happy to quote  
 But I really mustn't delay.  
 'Twas consigned to the boot of a big bodied lancer,  
 With special injunctions to "wait for an answer."

The answer came, as you may divine,  
 In bodily shape of the Baron von Stein,  
 Who had got himself up so excessively fine  
 That he looked like Hyperion going to dine,  
 Or a gent stepped out of a valentine.  
 "Dear lady," said he,  
 "Though I ask for my fee,  
 Believe me, I'm willing as willing can be  
 That business and pleasure should ever agree.  
 I need not say,  
 One's debts to pay  
 By easy instalments is far the best way ;  
 So, by your kind leave, I'll take one kiss to-day ;  
 To-morrow, one more ;  
 And clear off my score  
 The day after that, when the ring I restore :  
 Will you kindly permit me, when quite at your leisure,  
 To score off one-third of the price of your treasure ?"

\* \* \* \*

I find with regret,  
 That the ancient MS.  
 I've consulted as yet  
 With such signal success,  
 Grows here quite illegible: oh, such a mess!

What with nasty black thumbs,  
 And tobacco, and crumbs,  
 I can't for the life of me, make out what comes;  
 And it's doubly a nuisance to find that one's  
 losing

What people have thought so extremely amusing!  
 The fact is, I'm floor'd; and I only creep on  
 Through the help of the under-librarian at Bonn—  
 A kind, clever person, whose name I'd be glad  
 To publish in capital letters, and add  
 How much he assists me my task to surmount;  
 But he begs that I won't, upon any account.

Our version is this:—

That the very first kiss  
 Was not, after all, taken greatly amiss;  
 And, after the second, we both agree,  
 The Baron decidedly stayed for tea;  
 And, after the third, as we quite understood,  
 The Baron undoubtedly stayed for good!  
 Or rather, till somebody hinted, one day,  
 Of an elderly gentleman jogging that way,  
 All tattered, and battered, and grimy, and grey,  
 As if he'd had rather more thumps than pay;  
 When, to save explanations, in case of a call,  
 He mizzled one morning, ring, lady, and all!

The Count came back from Jericho  
 In a horrid frame of mind,  
 For since he marched, a year ago,  
 The Fates had been unkind;  
 And right upon his beaver,  
 A fiery Unbeliever



Had hit him such a vicious chop with something like  
a cleaver,  
As quite unshipped his figure-head, and left him  
in a fever;  
And some one else had knocked him down and trod  
upon his face,  
And started his rib-timbers with a big barbaric  
mace:  
And the surgeons, in their mystery,  
Had come up in the wake;  
For he'd eaten half a blister, he  
Declared, through their mistake!  
And, in scooping out an arrow  
That came from a Turk's quiver,  
They'd pricked his spinal-marrow  
And cut him in the liver.  
And rations had been scanty, and he'd lived on toads  
and roots,  
And made a little bouilli of his bridle and his boots;  
And, in short, he was with fortune altogether out of  
suits—  
And quite unlike the troubadour, who "touched his  
guitar  
As he was hastening home from the war!"  
And when at last his gates he reached,  
With dim old 'scutcheons graven,  
'Tis said above him sat and screeched  
A horrid rusty raven;  
And when he found that knocking  
Brought no one to the door,  
'Tis said, as if in mocking,  
The raven screeched the more;

'Till his fury grew quite shocking,  
 And, good gracious! how he swore!  
     I should have to go and bribe  
     Some cabman to be scribe,  
 Before one half the terms he used I'd venture to  
 describe;  
 And, even if so shockingly I trifled with the muse,  
 I'm certain that the Editor to print them would refuse.

My tale is nearly ended, and there's little more to add,  
 Except that in a week or so the Count went barking  
     mad,  
 And took to biting people's legs, a joke extremely bad;  
 Until at last, reluctantly, they had to buy a padlock,  
 And chain him up to ruminate alone upon his bad luck.  
 And so he lived, I think they say, about another year,  
 Growing dull and apathetic—putting spiders in his  
     beer,  
 And playing at cats-cradle, till his end drew very near;  
 And then he roused a little, but he hadn't much to say,  
 And hadn't time to say it, for he died that very day.  
 And when they came to bury him, a raven, all the  
     while,  
 Sat by, and croaked and chuckled in a most provoking  
     style;  
     Which seemed so bad a sign,  
     That they bribed a sleek divine  
 To light a pound of candles once a week upon the  
     shrine  
 Of every saint whose patronage extended to the Rhine;  
 And sing him safe, if possible, with masses ninety-nine!

## THE ROSE OF BASSORA.

A BALLAD OF TRUE LOVE.

“My love is like the red, red rose.”—*Old Song.*

A long time ago lived a wealthy Bashaw,  
Who ruled the fine town of Bassora;  
His word as a matter of course was the law,  
His beautiful daughter's name—Laura.

Her figure was fine, and her face was divine,  
In profile the rarest Circassian:  
While her fingers and feet were so cruelly neat,  
They'd have stirred a brass monkey to passion.

Now a prince to provide for so dainty a bride,  
Was the one thing that puzzled his life out;  
If a suitor applied who offended his pride,  
The haughty old boy'd whip his knife out.

“By gad, sir!” he'd say—“if you don't march away  
This moment—here goes at your vitals!  
A man must bring tin, my daughter to win,  
With at least his half-hundred of titles!”

Is it needful to tell that this brilliant young belle  
 Had her own little notions, in private?  
 That *her* mind had been clear, on one point, for a  
     year,  
 Just the point papa couldn't arrive at?

Of course not. The fact is, she'd long put in practice  
 A sadly undutiful scheme,  
 With a handsome young Persian—her father's aver-  
     sion,  
 Who wrote *billets-doux* by the ream.

From bright Ispahan came this polished young man,  
 A Sheik, rather highly connected;  
 Stay, I *can* cram his name in—'twas Iky-ben-jämen,  
 Universally loved and respected.

When the stars on the river were all in a quiver,  
 A 'funny' would come gliding down  
 To a certain snug bower, and wait there an hour,  
 Then shoot away back to the town.

I know not, alas, how the thing came to pass,  
 Some people suspicions *will* harbour;  
 But one cloudy night, with his eyes very bright,  
 PAPA sat alone in the arbour.

Down glided the boat—"She's there!" from afloat  
 Came a whisper;—"My rose of Bassora!  
 Good lord, what a squeeze! oh, gently love, please!  
 Let GO my nose! oh, I say! LAURA!"

How quick the transition from transports Elysian!  
The angry Bashaw was quite brutal.  
Ten slaves, at his beck, took the Sheik by the  
neck,  
'Till resistance was perfectly futile.

“To the dungeon, men, lead him! Be sure you  
don't feed him!  
To-morrow he dies—before breakfast!  
For a warning to all on my daughter who call,  
I'll make in a halter his neck fast.”

So swore the Bashaw, by his Prophet and Law,  
In tones which were perfectly frightful;  
And nobody doubted the Sheik would be knouted,  
And hung the next day before nightfall.

Next morning, however, his vizier so clever  
Said, “Pray sir, think twice ere you job him.  
His friends are of might, and they're safe to show  
fight;—  
They've pitched a big camp up at Tchob-im!”

The tyrant cried, “Well! Let his friends go to—  
dwell  
Where they please! you're aware that I've  
sworn it.  
Would you have me, man, break my oath that's at  
stake,  
To pardon this cursed young hornet?”

“Indeed, sir, not I. You have sworn he shall die:  
 Make him *dye*, sir—as black as a monkey!  
 Your words will be true, and your daughter—why,  
 pooh!  
 She’s as likely to flirt with her flunkey!”

Replied the old bear, “Aye, the joke will be rare!  
 At once to the tan-pits escort him:  
 Pitch him souse in the vat—make him black as my hat,  
 For once, we postpone the *post mortem*.”

\* \* \* \*

One long wretched week, our unfortunate Sheik,  
 In lather and agony toiling,  
 His flesh-brushes plied, scrubbing holes in his hide,  
 And went through a mild course of boiling.

Each advertised soap was a new gleam of hope;  
 He tried Mr. Rowland’s Kalydor;—  
 (I hope the *y*’s long—beg pardon if wrong.)  
 And the cruel result almost cried o’er:

For blooming red streaks, upon ebony cheeks,  
 Stole forth in quite floral profusion;  
 One’s impulse, no doubt, would have been to cry out,  
 “Uncle Tom, you old rogue! you’ve been rouging!”

In fact, all was vain:—not one inch of the stain  
 Gave way before foul means or fair.  
 To a man with a headful of love this was dreadful;  
 Ben-jämen gave way to despair.

And, pining away, he grew thinner each day;  
 Sighing, " Ah, shall I ever persuade her—  
 That exquisite Laura—to see an adorer  
 In the form of a Black Serenader?"

O, woman! hem,—*ladies!* (beg pardon,) how great is  
 Your sex's unshrinking devotion!  
 I've thrown down my pen, (picking up same again,)  
 In a fit of the wildest emotion.

There! thank you,—'tis over! now muse, little  
 rover,  
 Come back to your sober vocation;  
 And state what occurred, when our heroine heard  
 Of her Iky's transmogrification.

They told her the tale, and silent and pale  
 She listened. " Poor father!" she muttered;  
 " The older you grow, the less do you know  
 On which side your breakfast is buttered.

" Of lovers professed, Iky loves me the best;  
 I don't care how dingy his hues are!  
 Your wit in displaying, you'll find you've been  
 playing  
 A game that's adapted for two, sir!

" He sha'nt think I scorn him, and write a forlorn  
 hymn,  
 Sad-headed, ' The negro's petition!'  
 No! If I can't bleach him, at least I can teach him  
 How little *I* care for derision."

To her chamber she paced, and coolly unlaced  
 Her frock, and her stays,—if she wore 'em;  
 A snowy chemise came next,—oh, now, please!  
 My dear ma'am, don't murmur, 'decorum!'

I'm really not going to turn out too knowing—  
 No cause for alarm on that head, ma'am;—  
 You need simply suppose she took off all the  
 clothes  
 Which *you* wouldn't carry to bed, ma'am.

And then from a drawer in her gilt escritoire,  
 Not laudanum—as perhaps you expected,  
 But a phial of ink—'twas 'INDELIBLE PINK  
 FOR MARKING,' she calmly selected.

And, oh, such a sin! o'er her exquisite skin,  
 Neck, bosom, feet, fingers and face, ma'am,  
 Behind and before, she rubbed in rather more  
 Than a lifetime was like to efface, ma'am.

There! now the deed's done, and she sits in the  
 sun,  
 (Sun shines very warm at Bassora,)  
 'Till her glossy skin dries, and she looks, bless her  
 eyes!  
 Like a sealing-wax model of Laura.

Then she dressed and she ran to her father's divan,  
 Upsetting his brandy-and-water;  
 "See, father!" she cried, "my lover you've dyed,  
 And I've done as much for your daughter!"



Just fancy the row ! The Bashaw cried, " I vow,  
 You're too bad,—'pon my soul you are, Laura !  
 This cursed connexion—that ruined complexion,—  
 Confound you, girl, this *is* a floorer !

" No matter:—begone ! I'm a fool to take on  
 Like this,—go ! get out of my sight, miss !  
 You'll play *rouge et noir* with your father no more :  
 Bah ! marry black Iky to-night, miss !"

There ! more if you'd learn, I'd advise you to turn  
 To any 'third volume' that's handy ;  
 And mark how Misfortune strikes work Hymen's  
 porch in,  
 And everyone eats sugar-candy.

It will save common-places—Pa's horrid fierce faces,  
 All sympathy sternly repressing ;  
 The fond couple kneeling—the fine burst of feeling,  
 And pardon—turned up with a blessing !

And they lived, O so long, and they loved, O so  
 strong,  
 And their features grew daily less shady ;  
 'Till the Sheik merely looked like a very dark man,  
 And his wife like a very warm lady.

And if ever you ride by the Tigris so wide,  
 A tourist or learned explorer,  
 You'll hear the tale told of Ben-jämen the bold,  
 And his blooming red rose of Bassora !

# THE CALIPH'S DAUGHTER.

AN ADVENTURE IN MODERN BAGDAD.<sup>1</sup>

"Sir, it is impossible. It cannot be true. Don't tell that story again. You cannot think how poor a figure you make in telling it."—DOCTOR JOHNSON.

Three summer days the willing breeze blew on,  
That swept us down the Tigris: on the fourth  
It fail'd at even. Slowly plunged the sun  
Through golden sheets of calm; our pennon droop'd  
Low on the folded sail; the very sound  
Of broken ripples paused, as twilight fell.

Then rose the buzz of converse; they who slept,  
Languid and fainting through the fiery noon,  
Awoke and lit their pipes. Some fondly gazed  
On thy sweet uplands, glorious Laristan,  
Hued with deep evening violet; and some  
Discours'd of markets and of merchandise,  
And the late rise in turbans. As for me,  
I puff'd my pipe in silence.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Bentley's Miscellany*, No. cli., July, 1849.

“Can it be,”

I murmured—half in musing, half aloud—  
 “That yon tame town was the sublime Bagdad,  
 Of which I've dreamt since boyhood? Life! the man  
 Who penn'd the famous Nights of Araby  
 Was some untravell'd scribbler! not a crumb  
 Of the most faint adventure have I touch'd,  
 From first to last; I've lost both toil and time!  
 Congenial spirits! are ye thus no more?  
 Where's Cogia Hassan? Where's the Barmecide?  
 Where's Little Hunchback? Often have I asked,  
 And ask'd in vain. Things are not as they were.  
 I'm sorry that I came.”

Around me lay,  
 Stretch'd on the deck, my fellow-voyagers;  
 A motley lot: one straightway answer made,—  
 Shade of St. Vitus, what a man was he!  
 Uncouthly warp'd about, his twisted head  
 O'erlook'd his better shoulder, while around  
 His bare neck ran a flushing crimson streak,  
 As if he'd 'scaped half hung. Thus he began,  
 His wild eye flashing brightly as he spoke:

“Rot all adventures! if you wish to learn  
 Of yon Bagdad my brief experience,  
 You're welcome to the cursed narrative:  
 'Twill cure, I think, your blindfold hankering  
 For this infernal East!”

“It seems,” said I,  
 “You've met with something queer: begin, I beg,  
 I've seen your head, so pray disclose your tale.”  
 Hereat a whey-faced bagman gravely smiled,

And seconded my bidding. Thus adjured,  
Spoke my distorted friend.

“As to my name,  
It matters little; you may dub me Smith,  
'Twill answer every purpose. Know then, first,  
That I was born an English gentleman  
Some twenty years ago. From earliest youth,  
Vague dreams of travel seized me; nought would serve  
My purpose but adventures; and when these  
In town and college gradually pall'd,  
Fleeced in the former—in the latter pluck'd,  
I mizzled in disgust; the ‘gorgeous East,’  
Radiant with dreams of gilded palaces,  
Of Caliphs and Sultanas, dark-eyed maids,  
Romantic thieves, enchanters, Afrites, Ghouls,  
Seraglios, sleeping beauties, and what not,  
Seem'd a fair field of exploit. Off I shot,  
Bound for Bagdad, The morning papers whined,  
‘Return, rash youth! and all shall be forgiven!’  
Not quite so green, one balmy morning found  
Me snugly lodged in Monkey-street, Bagdad.  
Three days I spent adventureless; the next  
Produced one with a vengeance,—you shall hear,—  
Genie and all, I swear it happen'd thus:—

“I sat beside the Tigris, where it flows  
Through Bagdad's royal arches starr'd with gold,  
From washing palace-walls and water-gates  
Of terraced gardens, southward for the sea.  
Above the city rose: the sunset-fire  
Fell grandly on its purple battlements,  
On mosque and orb'd pavillion; dying down

Into a gorgeous twilight. Slowly drew  
A river-mist around me; the low sound  
Of distant music ceased, and all was still.

“Then, through the gloom, a dark-brow'd Genie strode,  
Ill-favour'd, swart and huge: his naked bulk  
Roll'd, an uncouth colossus: heavily  
He clapp'd me on the shoulder,—‘Christian, rise,  
And follow me.’

“‘And who the devil are you?’  
I answer'd him, quite startled, ‘Whither, pray,  
Am I to follow,—to some cavern hole,  
And there get eaten up? I'm not so green.’

“The monster grinn'd, and scratch'd its hideous head,  
And laugh'd, and rubb'd its hands: it seems my fears  
(For I, in truth, was in the sorest funk  
That ever mortal felt—and shew'd it too)  
Flatter'd it much. ‘Pooh—pooh!’ at length he said,  
‘I'm quite respectable,—neither Ghoul nor Jinn;  
And, if I were, I'd find me better grub  
Than tucks your Christian ribs; come, follow me;  
I do the bidding of the loveliest maid  
In Bagdad's gardens blooming:—she requests  
Your company to tea,—her taste no doubt  
Is something strange,—but—’

“‘Oh, if that's the case  
You might have told me so before,’ said I:  
‘Lead on, old gentleman.’

“Awhile we walk'd  
Through groves and bower'd gardens, long arcades,  
Darkened with swimming mist, where fragrance hung

Unstirred, the livelong night, and then again  
 Emerged upon an open terrace-range  
 Beside the river. Brightly danced the moon  
 On the deep waters by the marble arch,  
 As rapidly we cross'd. Through cloisters long,  
 And sounding galleries, with gleaming flights  
 Of never-ending stairs, half-seen, half-hid,  
 Branching on either hand, we kept our way.  
 At length we stopped. The Genie waved his hand,  
 And inward yawned enormous folding-doors,  
 That barred an inner vestibule; within,  
 Stretch'd on the marble pavement, slumbered guards,  
 Solemnly snoring, while, through pictured glass  
 Rain'd the clear moonlight on their burnish'd mail.  
 'I say, old gentleman, remember now,  
 No humbug!—honour bright?'

“‘ Pray, hold your tongue,'

Answered my guide, 'and look out where you step;  
 It's death to tread on a Believer's nose.'

“Before an inner door again we stayed,  
 Grated with golden bars: the Genie turned,  
 And whispering spoke:—'Within this chamber lies  
 The Caliph's peerless daughter: I have done  
 Her bidding, and must leave you. Enter in!  
 Allah be with you!'

“‘Fare thee well,' said I,

'I'm grateful!' So my guide the door unlocked,  
 And then, with swarthy palm outstretch'd, replied,—  
 'I'd thank your honour for a drop of beer.  
 Pray think on a poor devil,—'tisn't much

For a good hour of walking,—drink your health.  
I gave a piece of gold, and entered in.

“It was a sumptuous chamber, fitted up  
‘Regardless of expense;’ the moonlight fell  
Through stately windows, opening on a grove  
Of Eastern fragrance: bower and waterfall  
Flung perfume winged with music. There she sat  
Fairer than all beside! How should I mark  
The jewelled splendour of that rich saloon:  
The arras velvet, flower’d thick with gold;  
The softened lustre-light, the carpets traced  
In the rich looms of Persia, folding dark  
O’er sofa and luxurious ottoman!  
I saw but her,—her royal loveliness,  
Mingling with winning girlhood, as she smiled,  
And bade me sit beside her. Downward rolled  
Her soft dark hair beyond the caftan fringe  
Of silver velvet. Easternwise her arms  
And ankles glanced uncovered. By Saint George!  
Love at first sight made easy,—such a girl!  
Then, with a smile, ‘And Christian,’ she began,  
Driving a triple current though my veins,  
While my thrill’d heart beat madly, ‘canst thou  
cheer

A lonely maiden?—really it’s too bad  
Of my papa, the Caliph—out he goes,  
At dusk, to his divan, and here I’m left,  
To feed my birds, drink tea, and go to bed!  
I’m glad you’re come! I saw you in the street,  
Riding a chesnut; now we’ll have a chat.  
Pray make yourself at home! oh—by the bye!

What thought you of your guide? the faithful soul!  
Papa declares he drinks !'

“By jingo, sir,

My pulses ran champagne!—my very tongue,  
Spurr'd into most unwonted fluency,  
Caught up my thoughts in short-hand! never yet,  
Went such an evening since the world was new;  
So like a chime of happy birthday bells  
Flitted those rapturous moments! Who would pause,  
For rounds of starch'd and varnish'd compliment,  
And solemn introduction framed? not we!  
For, like two lonely rivers launch'd afar,  
On distant mountain-tops, that wander on,  
Through broad champaign and forest, till at length,  
Whirl'd in the foam of some great estuar,  
They mix their loving torrents, so our souls  
Touch'd, fired, and mingled! nor did she disdain  
To crown her easy conquest: now she sang,  
Wreathing a closer thrall; and then again  
Call'd up the wondrous tales of old that fill  
Yon land with deep enchantment,—of the seal  
Of devil-bottling Solomon,—the strife  
Of earth-sprung Genii,—and of Peri bowers,  
Twined under summer skies.

“Then I, in turn,

Full flush'd with love's hot rivalry began:  
Discours'd of London,—and of Regent-street;  
Myself its lion-lounger;—then digress'd  
On many a rich adventure—mostly lies—  
On travels, land and sea: with much beside,  
Needless to mention here. So sped the night;



Naught cross'd our rapture, and we heard without  
 The Caliph, half-seas with his evening cheer,  
 Tumble upstairs to bed.

“Day dawn'd apace:  
 We couldn't part. ‘Tell me again,’ said she,  
 ‘About your English beauties:—is it true  
 They don't wear trousers? Are they really fair—  
 Fair as myself for instance? tell me all!  
 I'm sure a man as handsome and gallant  
 As you must know their ways: pray let me hear!’

“Fool that I was! oh, curse my vanity!  
 How many a tale I told,—how much untrue  
 Of my resistless charms! Too late, alas!  
 I loathe my lying folly; yet I thought  
 In vanity to please: that she would smile  
 To hear me tell how I, the conqueror,  
 Bow'd at *her* feet, as overcome at last  
 By beauty yet more beautiful,—her name  
 Link'd with perfection, link'd with constancy!  
 Such was my thought.

“‘Indeed,’ she said, ‘you seem  
 Most great in Fortune's favour.—I suppose  
*My* name will now be knotted on your list;  
 To-morrow, perhaps, the purlieus of Bagdad  
 Will hear you boast, to some deluded girl,  
 Of this night's frolic. Well! I hope you'll add,  
 That the poor heart beneath this muslin beating  
 Waits your sublime acceptance! Pray observe  
 That in these cheeks, erst crimson'd at the praise  
 Of that resistless tongue, now duly stand  
 Lilies of hopeless love!’

“By Heaven, I swear,  
Your name shall never pass these lips of mine!  
Never!

“Well sworn and purposed!’ she replied;  
‘But I must have some pledge,—I really must.’

“Take it!’ cried I, ‘the dearest holiest pledge,—  
Take, take my heart, I ask no duplicate;  
Take it and smile!’ Her queenly brow grew dark,  
With scornful blood. ‘I do not want your heart;’  
She answer’d gravely; ‘*That* I can’t believe  
Is quite your own to give: if all be true  
You told me just this moment: I must have  
What never yet you gave to mortal fair:  
Some still most costly gage; this very night:  
Worthy the child of Caliph Alamin!—’

“Cursing my reckless tongue, I paused: ‘What else  
More costly can I give? and yet it was  
Your own before!’

“I shall not need it long,’  
Said she, half laughing, ‘I MUST HAVE YOUR HEAD!  
That’s only fair!’ With that she clapp’d her hands;  
In strode three brawny eunuchs, arm’d and mail’d.  
‘Pray lead this Christian gentleman down stairs,  
With all due honour, and escort him home:  
But—keep his head for me. Farewell, and thanks  
For all your goodness; I shall keep the pledge  
You leave me, with the greatest confidence!  
Stay! take another glass of that sherbet  
Before you start; well, if you really wont,  
Good night again; good night, and many thanks!’

"I could not speak.—Love, Anger, Agony  
 Choked my thick breath. I could not even strive  
 To dash them backward.—Like a fiendish dream,  
 Nursed by prelusive lobsters, seem'd it all!  
 They dragged me off.—Down a steep winding stair  
 We went—we reached a corridor below:  
 Strength—sense return'd,—I hit out right and left,  
 And hurl'd them from me; more than maniac force  
 Nerving my desperate arm: three noses bled.  
 The rascals, rot 'em, hollo'd 'murder—ho!  
 Through ringing galleries—through cloisters lit  
 With glimmering lamps I ran. Hope gleam'd afresh,  
 In the cool breeze of morn, that softly blew  
 Through a low garden portal. It is gain'd!  
 One minute more and freedom!

"Gad! the shock,  
 The horrid heart-thrill, as a giant grasp  
 Clutch'd at my throat! the drunken laughter-peal  
 That echoed back my shriek, 'Hoy—master! stop!  
 Don't cut an old acquaintance! ho—ho—ho!  
 Why run so fast? Come—come! you surely know  
 Your best of friends, the Genie.'

"Let me go!"  
 Scream'd I, 'they'll catch me! Do—for Heaven's  
 sake!  
 I hear them running!'

"So do I,' rejoin'd  
 The jovial brute, 'ha—ha! but what of that?  
 You've spent a pleasant evening? Allah knows  
 I've had another! Lord! your bit of gold  
 Did wonders at the tavern. Baba's best

Was all my tippie: nothing in Bagdad  
Comes near it.'

“‘Curses on you! let me go!  
I roar'd, 'your lady wants my head—my head!  
Here! take my purse, but loose me!

“‘No, indeed,  
Hiccup'd the wretch, 'you probably have done  
Something to need such gentle chastisement!  
Come! tell me all about it. Certainly,  
I warn'd you to be prudent. Don't I serve  
Our Caliph's matchless daughter? Ain't I sure  
You love her far too well thus to deny  
Her first request—ha—ha! Come, let me hear,  
How passed the time since nightfall?"

“All was vain;  
Bootless my kicks (for I, alas, had changed  
Hobnails for velvet slippers,) vain my prayers,  
Struggle, reproach, and threat,—a dozen blacks  
Rush'd in upon me,—bound me hand and foot,  
And lugg'd me back; the Genie's drunken laugh  
Still ringing in my ears. They led me down,  
Torch-lighted to a dungeon, where the block  
Stood handy. There amid vindictive sneers,  
They bade me lay my neck; and with much glee  
Chopp'd off my head, and left me!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not many days ago, the writer stood within a few feet of the scaffold upon which a criminal, seated in a chair, underwent the German punishment of decapitation by the sword. It is only after witnessing such a spectacle, that one can properly appreciate the revolting flippancy with which similar scenes are made the subject of ludicrous allusion throughout all Oriental fable. To such a charge the writer believes he has laid himself open for the last time.

# A LAY OF THE BRIEFLESS.<sup>1</sup>

## PART I.

[The following lines were discovered last week, in company with a hat and stick, upon the banks of the Serpentine. We willingly publish them, at the request of the police authorities, in the hope that they may afford some clue to the discovery of the unfortunate author.]

Oh, I am a-weary of Pumpkin Court,  
Its flags are hateful all to me !  
Other men's chambers by clients are sought,  
To mine comes never the ghost of a fee !  
My clerk sits in his mouldy den  
Gloomily biting his nails,  
Or vacantly drawing of skeleton men,  
With goggle-eye faces and tails.  
There are two that he's always a-drawing of nights  
And I hear him snort with glee,  
As down in the corner the rascal writes,  
"That's master—t'other man's me !"  
He knows that each knock is the knock of a dun,  
Or that some little dirty boy's done it in fun.  
"Ah, knuckle away till your knuckles is sore,"  
Says he: "what's the good of *our* minding the door?"  
So it isn't worth while for a cove to call,  
And nobody, now-a-days, knocks at all !

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, No. ccxi., vol. viii., July, 1851.

I once was told,  
 By a gipsy bold,  
 (She scanned my palm on Epsom wold,  
 That I should have more than my pockets would hold,  
 Round red sovereigns, clinking gold !  
 Says she, "The first of next July,  
 I'm shot if your happiness won't run high,  
 For it's just about then that the starch will fly  
     From out of your virgin wig !  
     Though now you're poor,  
     Your luck's as sure  
 As the knife to a Christmas pig !  
 There's a lady as loves you that's fair and tall :  
 Stand us a quartern, and hear it all !"

She lied, the jade ! A lighter fee  
 Had brought me, 'by return, post free,'  
 A princely fortune in the Three  
     Per Cents, from Joseph Ady !  
 She lied ! The glorious first is here,  
 And longer grows the fell arrear,  
 And clients none at all appear,  
     Let alone the fair young lady !

\* \* \* \*

The clock had struck ten, and I sat me a-down  
 In the species of study distinguished as 'brown.'  
 "I'm the very unluckiest beggar in town,"  
 Cried I, "in the darkness of Destiny's frown."  
     When, hark ! I declare,  
     A step on the stair !  
 (I forgot to remark that my rooms are three-pair,  
 Quite handy for heaven—in case I go there.)

At once, from my toes to the tips of my hair,  
I started and wondered, for visitors there,  
At that time of night, were remarkably rare:

Still greater the shock

When a sharp double knock

Came, bang! like a pistol gone off at half-cock,  
And I heard my clerk shuffle his way to the lock,  
To see which of my duns had come this way to mock.

They laugh!

They chaff!

I'd sooner by half,

They'd come in and bleed me at once, like a calf!

Louder they chatter, and laugh the more,

And now my clerk's in a regular roar;

Then, bursting in

With a handful of 'tin,'

"Oh, master," he shouted, "here *is* a begin!

I'd give a good pound now to be in your skin,

I'm shot if I wouldn't! Oh, shake us a fin!

Ten guineas! Ten guineas! Oh, my, what a game!

Count 'em backwards or forwards they're always the  
same!

And master! Oh, master! the best of the job,

See here! by the poker, they've tipped me five bob!

If it isn't a BRIEF,

I'll be scragged for a thief!

Oh, aint we just going to shake out a reef!"

I roared, I sighed,

I laughed, I cried,

And opened my eyes so excessively wide

You'd really have thought I must wear 'em outside,

And couldn't have shut 'em again if I tried.  
 I fell on the neck of my trusty boy  
 With a wild, wild hug of convulsive joy ;  
 ("Crikey, master !" says he, " don't you strangle my  
 throat !")

And blubbered a cataract over his coat.  
 With tingling fingers I counted the gold,  
 And ten bright, round, red sovereigns told !  
 Then eagerly, wildly tore the tape,  
 That girdled my white brief's beautiful shape.

I glanced it through, and found that Roe  
 Had grievously injured the harmless Doe—  
 Wounded him, battered him, torn his coat,  
 And pitched him into a castle moat ;  
 Pulled him out, and pummelled him more,  
 Pinched him, and kicked him behind and before ;  
 Gouged him, scalped him, trod on his toes,  
 Pushed in his eye-tooth and pulled off his nose,  
 Flattened his head—to wit, with a spade—  
 And nicked his ribs—to wit, with a blade—  
 Till Doe couldn't anyway work at his trade,  
 And was cruelly sick, and extremely afraid ;  
 And every stiver he had in the till  
 Had gone to settle the doctor's bill !  
 All which merely meant, that, while over their beer,  
 They'd quarrelled ; when Doe got a box on the  
 ear ;—  
 The rest being simply *ad libitum* readings,  
 To make the case neat and compact on 'the  
 pleadings.'



I saw myself in Fancy's glass  
 Stand forth with front of triple brass;  
 I saw the Judge, I saw the Jury,  
 I saw the plaintiff green with fury;  
 I heard my own hot eloquence  
 Denounce in thunder the defence,  
 Proclaim the perjured villain, Roe,  
 And ask him where he thought he'd go!  
 And then, oh, then, the wild applause  
 That told me I had gained my cause;  
 While with tumultuous cheers came blent  
 The Judge's well-turned compliment!  
 I heard it—saw it—felt it all!  
 Could pride like this deserve a fall?

Two friends I had, and only two,  
 Barring pawnbrokers many, and bailiffs a few;  
 Two friends I had, who both, like me,  
 Knew seldom a visitor—never a fee,  
 Bright was the vision of 'supper for three!'

"Fly, fly, brave youth, to Temple-square,  
 You know George Samuel Brown lives there,  
 Give him my compliments, say, 'can he spare,  
 Two hours this evening to muzzle old Care?'  
 And further fly, brave Ariel, still,  
 And be careful to say that it *isn't* a bill  
 When you ask Augustus Smith if he will  
 Be with me this evening a bumper to fill?  
 We'll meet at the 'Rainbow;' and, Ariel, stay;  
     Visit, I pray,  
     Without delay,

That excellent woman, my laundress,<sup>1</sup> and say,  
 I'd thank her this moment to toddle this way.  
 For boiling a kettle, and setting a tray,  
 I don't know her equal ; and toddy to supper  
 Comes natural as to the saddle the crupper,  
 That's all !" He flew ! My laundress came,  
 Hoping as how that I didn't make game  
 Of a poor old soul as was widdi'd and lame.

“ Dear me, Mrs. Jones,  
 Do spare your groans,”  
 Says I, “ tisin't I would have troubled your bones,  
 But the fact is, good woman, my grandmother's dead,  
 And has left lucky Briefless to reign in her stead !  
 So quick, Mrs. J.,  
 Step over the way  
 To the ‘ Nine Happy Niggers,’ and civilly say  
 I'll thank 'em to lend me both tumblers and tray,  
 For I've company coming and mean to be gay ;  
 We sup at the ‘ Rainbow’—chops, kidneys, and beer ;  
 But our grog, Mrs. Jones, we intend to take here.  
 So I'll thank you to see that the decks are all clear,  
 The tumblers all bright,  
 And the fire alight,  
 With a fizzing hot kettle by twelve this night !”

Oh, wasn't the dingy old lady struck dumb  
 When I tipped up the change for a bottle of rum !

<sup>1</sup> ‘Laundress,’ in Temple nomenclature, is the style and title of the venerable female whose duties correspond with those of a college ‘bedmaker.’

She eyed me askance  
 With a doubtful glance,  
 As round my arm-chair I continued to dance ;  
 And says, " Mr. B., sir, I hope, to be sure,  
 You aint been a cribbin' the great Koh-i-noor ?  
 Reckillect, sir, it wasn't no sin to be poor."

I calmed her scruples: told a lie,  
 I've not the slightest notion why ;  
 Remarked old people often die  
 And leave their cash behind 'em.  
 Why upon earth I couldn't say,  
 " The simple fact is, Mrs. J.,  
 I've got my maiden brief to-day,"  
 Or why I lied at random,  
 I know not now—I never knew:  
 I burst away—I ran, I flew !  
 Dim visions, yet, around me cling  
 Of that wild night: we did the thing !  
 The very waiters formed a ring  
 And laughed with greasy glee,  
 As chop and steak and kidney fled,  
 And still the gleaming tankard sped  
 From bar to board, and still we fed  
 And drank like whirlpools three !  
 And then, in my pride,  
 " My bricks," I cried,  
 " I needn't inform you with me it's high tide,  
 And the tin's running in ; but I bet you guess wide,  
 And wouldn't say *how*, in a month if you tried,  
 So shoot as you may !"  
 Says Brown, " I'd lay

A trifle you've spouted a ticker to-day."  
 Said Smith, "I think he's nabbed a thief  
 With a whacking reward!" "No," says I; "it's a  
 BRIEF!"

"A BRIEF! No, no!"

Roared they, "*That's* no go!

We'll pound it you haven't a paper to show!  
 'Tisn't likely now, is it?" I laughed, ho, ho!  
 "Come to my chambers, you'll find Doe and Roe  
 A Brief and three tumblers all in a row!  
 We'll wet the Brief, we'll count my wealth,  
 And drink a future Lord Chancellor's health!"

"Agreed, agreed!"

The waiter was fee'd;

We left him very much pleased indeed:  
 We rushed all three at the Temple Gate,  
 Gloomily frowning in midnight state;  
 We knocked the knock of a Chartist mob,  
 To waken the porter asleep on his hob.  
 Methought a reverent glance he wore,  
 And bowed as he never had bowed before;  
 "'Tis well!" said I; "those practised eyes  
 Detect a Chancellor on the rise!"

Clattering up the lamp-lit stair,  
 We rushed like madmen, as we were,  
 We burst into the old 'three-pair';  
 The fire was blazing, the glasses were bright,  
 The jolly old grog-bottle laughed in the light!  
 The kettle was fizzing "By George, it's all right!"

We chuckled, and all, in our happiest tones,  
Broke out in a chorus of "Good Mrs. Jones!"

'Good Mrs. Jones' came curtseying in—  
"They hadn't no rum, so I've brought you gin,"  
Says she; "and the table is nicely laid,  
And see what a capital fire I've made!  
That great paper faggot has served its turn—  
It's right in the middle! Oh, didn't it burn!"  
"Ye Gods," I roared, "for Death's relief!  
O Heaven and Earth!—MY VIRGIN BRIEF!"

## THE FINALE.

[The intense curiosity evinced by the public with reference to the fate of the unfortunate Mr. Briefless, whose hat and stick, it will be remembered, were discovered last month upon the bank of the Serpentine, has induced us to publish the following effusion just received from Pumpkin Court.]

It was a strange, warm summer night—  
 A round, white star-drop, here and there,  
 Hung blinking in the moonless height,  
 And haloes crossed the tangled air,  
 As forth I rushed. You know too well  
 How Briefless rose, how Briefless fell—  
 What made his mighty bosom swell,  
     What bade it bleed and burst.  
 If not, recall your latest TAIT,  
 July the first its hateful date,  
 Read there the doom of envious Fate,  
     And learn—yes, learn the worst !  
 What followed is a mazy dream ;  
 I think Jones fainted with a scream ;  
 I think Smith laughed—I think his head  
 I punched with fist of angry lead,  
     And war-whoop wild and shrill !  
 I think Brown chaffed—I think he bled ;  
 I think both lip and nose ran red  
     In one short fiery mill !

Yet, even this, I wouldn't swear ;—  
 Until I breathed a purer air  
 Than blows through Pumpkin's dreary square,  
     I only felt—undone !  
 One wretched serf indeed I met,  
 Upon whose brow my mark I set ;  
 He chafed me in my angry fret  
     By bellowing " Pa-st one !"  
     Enough of this ! Through Temple Bar  
 I rushed into the Strand ;  
     A cabman shouted, " Here you are !"  
 He knew not that my hand  
     Was raised to curse my destiny,  
     And not to such a thing as he.

Far westward, towards Trafalgar-square,  
 A bull's eye pink, with sickly stare,  
 And lettered lines of bloodshot glare,  
     Scowls on the midnight pave :  
 " And here," I cried, " is rest at last !  
 The lot is drawn, the die is cast,  
 And, swamped in Fortune's ruthless blast,  
     Here Briefless claims a grave !  
 Come, true apothecary, come !  
 One penny roll with poisoned crumb,  
 One sleepy cup of hemlock dumb—  
     'Tis all the gift I crave !"

I rang a peal both long and loud  
     'Till I broke the night-bell handle,  
 And roused a man in a dimity shroud,  
     With a night-cap and flat candle.

Out of the window his wrathful head  
 Came popping like Punch, as it bitterly said,  
 "Wot are you arter, you gröggy young swell,  
 A-jerking a gen'leman's meddicle bell?  
 In a minnit or less you'll walk off to the cell.  
 Come! what do you want there a-ringin' and  
 drummin'?"  
 If it *is* your good lady, I'm comin'! I'm comin'!"

"Come down!" I cried. "Such need as mine  
 Might rouse the Sleepers Seven;  
 Come down, if you are in the medical line,  
 Come down, for the love of Heaven!"

In went the head: with a clank and a clack,  
 A chain went down and a bolt went back;  
 And a sharp little snout  
 Came ferreting out,  
 Barking, "What upon earth is this shindy about?  
 Now then, sir, what is it?  
 Who ask'd for this visit?  
 Are you drunk, sir—or dumb, sir? Come, pray be  
 explicit."

"I shouldn't have hit such a rat-tat-tat-tat,"  
 Says I, sobbing loud, "but I don't keep a cat,  
 And what's the best poison to poison a rat?"

If some sad ghost had risen,  
 With cold blood in its veins,  
 From subterranean prison,  
 (Suppose the city drains,)



And on the night-bell mournfully  
 Tolloed a slow minute peal,  
 And hailed the Doctor scornfully  
 With face of glistening veal,  
 And bade him to the shady  
 Descend on rapid pins,  
 Because a spectral lady  
 Was lying in with twins—  
 I doubt if through his little breast  
 The blood had bounded quicker,  
 Than when I broke upon his rest,  
 In anguish and in liquor.

With shaded eyes and look amazed  
 Upon my face awhile he gazed,  
 And then I saw his rising bile  
 Melt in a strange yet pitying smile.  
 "Come in," he said, and closed the door.  
 "A rat, you say?—his pranks are o'er.

I quite understand;  
 I'll take him in hand,

And I don't think his days will be long in the land.  
 There's nothing like arsenic—eh, sir?"

"By Jove!"

Cried I, "but you *are* an intelligent cove!  
 That's just what I wanted."

"Ha, ha! just so,"

Says he, "only don't you go peaching, you know.

For the Lord of Carlisle,  
 That meddling old file,

Won't let us sell it, 'cause people *will* bile  
 It up with their puddin' their vitals to spile;

Unless, to be sure, there's a witness to look  
 And sign his name legible down in a book,  
 As much as to say, it shan't go to the cook.<sup>1</sup>  
 But with you, sir, I see that it can't go wrong ;  
 So I'll mix you a dose of my superfine strong.  
 Don't say where you got it—that's all." He took  
 An ill-looking canister out of a nook,  
     Saying " Ah this rat's a martyr ;  
     He'll find he's caught a Tartar ;  
 He'll wag his tail and wink his eye for just a minnit  
 arter,  
 And then for kingdom come he'll take a precious quick  
 departur'  
 I reckon to his latter end you wouldn't walk him  
 smarter,  
 Not if you caught him with a cat and hung him in a  
 garter.  
 I'll mark the paper POISON, sir, in case it's left about ;  
 Good night ! a shilling—thank you : it will answer,  
 I've no doubt."

I leant my back against a wall,  
 And swallowed the packet—string, paper and all.

    Woes of that memorable eve !  
     Vain were my poet-skill  
     Your tangled web again to weave,  
     Or say how very ill  
 I grew. In vain I cried for death,  
 A hiccup shook my gasping breath ;  
 I staggered on through square and street,

*Vide* 14th and 15th Vict. c. 13. s. ii.

With sob and sigh of maudlin bleat,  
 And cursed the druggist for a cheat,  
 In language that I won't repeat;  
     Until at length I stood  
 Beside a shining midnight lake,  
 "By George," I cried, "this bosom-ache  
 May now be cured and no mistake!  
 From life's vague dream at last I wake,  
 And here my thirst of glory slake,  
     And quit the stage for good!"

Pale floating gleams of liquid light  
 Flashed out in broken circlets bright;  
 The chequered sky, the black old trees  
     Spun whirling round. A splash! a dive!  
 The hum as of ten thousand bees,  
     When somebody's upset the hive,  
 All came, and went, and came again.  
 I swam—I sunk, in horrid pain;  
 And then, and not till then, I found  
 I'd just as lieve remain undrowned.  
 Once more I rose, and with a yelp  
 Like that of some devoted whelp,  
 I gasped and bubbled, "Help! HELP! HELP!"  
 Alas! repentance came too late—  
 The very fishes mocked my fate:  
 In shoals they rose to tear their prize;  
 Their cold blunt noses in my eyes  
 Came dub, dub, dub! With eager-bite  
 They tore my whiskers left and right,  
 And bit my fingers, nipped my nose,  
 And swarmed within my smaller clothes.

They dragged me down : I may have rolled  
 Amid 'great anchors, heaps of pearl,'  
 And 'wedges' of resplendent gold ;  
 I only felt one dizzy whirl.  
 But, when I rose for time the last,  
 A shout along the midnight blast  
 Rang sharply, "In the water, ho !  
 Sing out again !—hollo hollo !"  
 I answered not, for down my throat  
 The fish swam thick ; but soon a boat,  
 With flying oars, and lantern slung  
 Athwart the bow, beside me swung.  
 The steersman shouted "Slack, men—slack !"  
 And drove his boat-hook through my back.  
 Four stalwart oarsmen hauled me in,  
 And picked the fishes off my skin.  
 "Poor buffer," said they,  
 "He's seen a bad day,  
 Them gudgeons has bitten his eye-lids away ;  
 They've nibbled his ears off as close as can be,  
 And his nose is a sight for a sinner to see,  
 And he's bustin' with mud, and he's all in a shiver !  
 Vy did he souse into the Serpentine River ?"

They pulled ashore—they laid me out ;  
 They rolled me up in a blanket stout :  
 They rubbed me down with a red-hot brick,  
 Delighted to find I could hallo and kick,  
 Then put me to bed full of brandy and bark,  
 Saying, "There now—he'll wake up as fresh as a  
 lark !"

The wretched morning dawned at length :  
 I woke, like Samson, shorn of strength.  
 A cramp-knot gnawed in every limb,  
 My eyes were very sore and dim,  
 Yet, somehow, still I seemed to swim,  
 To sink, to struggle, and to cry  
 For help. Where was I? whence—and why?

        Around my bed,  
         I heard the tread  
 Of several 'Royal Humanes,'  
         Who patted my head,  
         And cheerfully said  
 " We're amply repaid for our pains !  
 Perhaps, my dear sir, if you have a spare sovereign,  
 You'll pop it some day the Society's coffer in—  
 That's just as you please. There's a cab at the  
         door,  
 And we'll see you safe home to the old third floor!"  
 They drove me home; and up the stair  
 They carried me safe, like Guy Fawkes, in a chair ;  
 Till, on reaching the landing, the end of my  
         journey,  
 I stood face to face with a wolfish attorney !

        I knew him well—'twas he from whom  
         That fatal BRIEF of yesterday  
 Came, like a thunderbolt of doom !  
         I strove, in vain, to faint away.  
 "'Tis gone !" I shrieked, "'tis burnt !—Accursed  
 Be Mrs. Jones. You know the worst !  
 Here, slam my head against the wall ;

Put me out of the window, and leave me to fall ;  
 Do, somebody, please—if it isn't too small."  
 "Dear sir," said the Wolf, "'tis no matter at all !  
 Pray, pray don't take on so—you fill me with sorrow :  
 My *dear* sir, I'll send you another to-morrow !"

I stared in vain,  
 For through my brain  
 Vague thoughts ran wild. "Oh pray explain,"  
 I gasped, "I'm in such horrid pain !"

Then gaily spoke that man of law,  
 "You *had* an old god-father ;  
 But he has been scragged by a Turkey Bashaw,  
 Until he's choky—rather !"  
 He lived beside the Ganges broad,  
 That runs nigh old Calcutta ;  
 He used to eat bank-notes, good Lord !  
 Between his bread-and-butter ;  
 Till, as I said, he died in cord,  
 As dead as that there shutter.  
 They called his name, in their Indian slang,  
 Sir Tigery Peppery Ourang Outang.  
 Well, once, it should seem, when you might have been  
 Almost, I should fancy, too little to wean,  
 Sir Tigery came your father to see,  
 And gave you a ride on his shaky old knee,  
 Till you cried with delight—being partial to yellow—  
 'See father—oh see ! what a beautiful fellow !'  
 He never forgot it ; your name went down  
 At once in his will for the uttermost 'brown.'

There's rupees in silver and mohurs in gold,  
There's a hat-ful of pearls—value?—gad, it's untold!  
There's consols by thousands, as good as a plum,  
And a string of pink diamonds as big as your thumb!  
I wish you all joy, sir—life, happiness, health,  
And a *sharp, honest agent* to manage your wealth;  
My firm, I assure you, are proud as can be  
To have found out your merit first—paid your first  
fee!

Long (of course) ere we knew you so luckily starred.  
Good morning, sir! Stay—let me hand you my card!"

And was it all true? By the sun and the light,  
'Twas true as could be, and the gipsy was right,  
And Briefless has more than his pockets can hold,  
Round red sovereigns, clinking gold!

THE END.

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